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PARTICIPANTS' PERSPECTIVES OF A LEADERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE: SCHOOL-BASED STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN STRATHCONA COUNTY

BY

TERRANCE PYSYK

©

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

ADULT AND HIGHER EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT, CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1994

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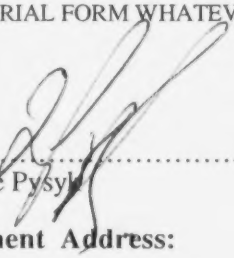

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PARTICIPANTS' PERSPECTIVES OF A LEADERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE: SCHOOL-BASED STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN STRATHCONA COUNTY

SUBMITTED BY TERRANCE PYSYK IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION.

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Date: 12 Jan 1994

Dedication

To my loving and supportive wife, Sherry, whose patience and encouragement maintained my focus throughout this study, and to my beautiful children, Nicole and Mark, who allowed Dad to get this study done with time away from them.

ABSTRACT

This study identifies participants' perceptions of Year 2 (Phases 3 & 4) of the Leadership in Professional Development (LPD) course offered by the Alberta Teachers' Association and implemented in Strathcona County Schools during the 1992-93 school year. This study continues where Souster's (1992) study of Year 1 ended. The problem was to identify the strengths and weaknesses of an innovation, specifically the LPD course and what the participants believed were the factors of implementing and maintaining an effective school-based staff development (SBSD) program. The purpose was to improve the LPD course to better serve the needs of the participants, and ultimately the students, during the implementation of the SBSD programs in the respective schools. The second purpose of this study was to assist the decision makers at various levels of administration and involvement to improve the program processes based on the findings. This study consisted of data being gathered from participants who were involved in Year 2 of the course. The in-depth interview was the method of data collection. Ten of a possible 25 participants responded and agreed to participate in the research study. The results may also be used to assist the Superintendent and the Supervisor of Staff Development, Human Resources in Strathcona County in the formative and summative evaluation of program involvement and to maintain their commitment to funding of subsequent program involvement if it is warranted. The recommendations are to increase support for this program as it is perceived by the participants to be of extreme value, especially at the elementary level. Ownership of professional development is believed to be best empowered to the staff to create the greatest benefit. The students ultimately benefit.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A study of this nature is not possible to conduct without the willing participation, direct involvement, and support of several individuals and groups who were always available to listen, review, and provide feedback.

I wish to thank my supervisor, Dr. Darius Young for his patience, knowledge, expertise and encouragement throughout this study. Several drafts under tight time-lines were not out of the ordinary.

I wish to thank Dr. Jim Small, and Art Deane, who agreed to sit on my committee.

I wish to thank Dr A. Konrad and the ACT Education Department professional and clerical staff who were available to assist whenever requested.

I wish to thank all the graduate students who shared their experiences and knowledge through classes, coffee, and support groups which made the process of writing a bit easier to perform.

I wish to thank Strathcona County for granting me a sabbatical for the purpose of conducting this research.

I wish to thank Denise Gates for proofreading the manuscript.

I wish to also thank the administrative staff at Ardrossan Junior/Senior High School for their support and understanding of the time commitment for this study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Following the 1989 development of a major strategic planning initiative called 'Towards 2000: Shaping Our Future' and completion of this plan in June, 1990, the Strathcona County Schools planning team made several recommendations which included staff development programs. One of the twelve belief statements which were identified by the planning team was "The quality and well-being of our staff are essential to successful schooling of our students" (Strathcona County Schools, 1991). The planning team identified six critical issues, several system objectives, specific strategies and detailed action plans based on the belief statements.

As a result, the Leadership in Professional Development (LPD) course was implemented in the fall of 1991 to train two leadership candidates in each participating school. Souster's (1992) study supported the continuation of the course and the implementation was being continued in the system at the time of this study to improve school-focused professional development in each of the participating schools. Through the commitment of staff and administrators in Strathcona County schools the improvements and benefits have an increased possibility of being sustained. It has been supported through research that improvements are not sustained without specific system-wide commitments, support structures, and consistent monitoring (Levine & Broude, 1989). It is the teacher who ultimately makes the difference. Without committed, educated teachers, any reform efforts will be blunted and short-lived (Valencia & Killion, 1988).

This study is consistant with the school system's and the Alberta Teachers' Association's (ATA) position on consistant monitoring of the implementation of a school-based staff development innovation. Through the voluntary interviewing of participants of the LPD course, the findings of this study have revealed several valuable observations.

Strathcona County's Strategic Plan, 'Towards 2000'

Staff development is an integral component of the education process and has been specifically identified within numerous action plans in the entire strategic plan. Within the strategic plan there is one critical issue, "The need to make the shift from an information-acquiring to an information-processing orientation" (Strathcona County Schools, 1991), which addresses staff development in great detail. It includes the key strategy, "We will develop and implement a Staff Development Program which will provide teachers and support staff with the skills and attitudes necessary to facilitate students' accessing, critically assessing, processing, analyzing and using information to solve problems and make decisions." (Strathcona County Schools, 1991).

Based on the above noted strategy, the Human Resources Department implemented several staff development initiatives based on one action plan in particular: to "Develop and Implement a Staff Development Program by first initiating an orientation and training program for administrators and staff responsible for staff training and development including such areas as adult learning; cooperative learning; cooperative planning; teacher-friendly staff development; peer coaching; teacher directed orientation; teaching common instructional concepts; teaching life-long coping skills; and second, by evaluating the Staff Development Program annually using employee and group data collection including (but not limited to) surveys and individual and group comments"(Strathcona County Schools, 1991).

Leadership in Professional Development Course

One of the results of the strategic plan 'Towards 2000: Shaping Our Future', was that Strathcona County schools implemented a pilot project of School-Based Staff Development (SBSD) in September, 1991, involving 11 schools across all three levels. These schools proceeded through Phases 1 and 2 (Year 1) of the 'Leadership in

Professional Development Course' (LPD Course), which had been developed by the Alberta Teachers' Association Professional Development Department. The schools which had completed Phases 1 and 2 during the 1991-92 school year continued on to Phases 3 and 4 (Year 2) during the 1992-93 school year. The ongoing support and commitment by the Board of Education and the apparent success rate as well as levels of use indicated by Souster (1992), had supported the continuation of the course allowing ten additional schools to participate in Phases 1 and 2 during the 1992-93 school year. Provisions had been made for the remaining schools in Strathcona County to participate in the course, provided they were interested in this volunteer program.

The requirements of the Leadership in Professional Development Course were that each voluntarily participating school identify two candidates from their school: one administrator and one teacher. These leadership candidates, also referred to as lead teachers, were released from teaching duties to attend the leadership sessions. After each session the participants returned to their schools to share their newly discovered knowledge and skills with their staff to plan and implement a school-based staff development program specifically designed for their school.

The time allotted for training the Leadership Candidates amounted to three Friday afternoon sessions of three hours each for each phase of the course, totalling twelve three hour sessions for the entire course. This release time was resourcefully made available by the Staff Development Department, scheduling the program to allow administrators to attend without requiring additional substitute costs as principals generally kept Friday afternoons open for system meetings.

The time requirement for the Leadership in Professional Development course was provided for by the Staff Development Department and was time over and above the system's allotted three days of professional development which consisted of two system

days which may have been used by each school for system in-service activities or school-based professional development at the discretion of the staff and principal of each individual school. During the time of this research study Strathcona County had deemed one of the two system days to be a flexible day which each individual school would be able to schedule anytime throughout the school year to assist in meeting their own school-based needs. There was also one Institute Day which was planned by the Local Professional Development Committee of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), two days sanctioned by the Alberta Teachers' Association for Teachers' Convention and finally two system operational days (not classified as professional development days) which were used by each school at the beginning and end of the school year to facilitate administrative duties pertinent to the operation of the school for the year.

LPD Course Goals

The overall goals of Phases 1 and 2 in Year 1 of the Leadership in Professional Development Course were to promote and enhance effective, ongoing, school-focused Professional Development (PD) including areas of study such as preparing school personnel for leadership roles in their schools; examining the process of change; establishing a support network of colleagues; and designing a school-based plan based on needs assessments. Phase 2 was designed to suit the needs of schools and school staffs that had made a significant beginning in implementing a staff development or professional development program for the school. The course focuses on planning and implementation of a staff development program, evaluation of programs and long-range goals, networking among participants and a further examination of effective models of staff development. The course also allowed the participants to examine the role of staff development in the career development of teachers.

The overall goals of Phases 3 and 4 in Year 2 were designed for schools and school staffs that had participated in the previous levels of the course. These schools had a school-focused staff development program which had been designed to meet teacher-identified needs on an ongoing basis. The school-based PD committee was working on a plan for continuous professional development of the school staff.

Year 2 of the course focused on maintaining a program of staff development which included networking, continuity, motivation, changing needs and evaluation. The emphasis was on meeting changing needs and the skills necessary to sustain a long-term PD program. It addresses the problem of changes in staffing and the awareness about staff development differences in knowledge.

The Leadership in Professional Development Course provided a step by step and ongoing process for implementation of the innovation to the staff of interested schools and systems. An innovation such as this is much more likely to take effect when teachers are stepped through the process rather than given information and expected to implement it without ongoing support (Joyce and Showers, 1980; Levine & Broude, 1989; Byrne, 1983).

The Purpose of The Study

The first purpose of this study was to identify what participants believed to be strengths and weaknesses of the LPD Course in order to improve the course to better serve the needs of staff and students in the respective schools (Souster, 1992).

The second purpose of this study was to assist the decision makers at various levels of administration and involvement (individual teacher, as well as subject area, school, system and course presenters) to improve the course processes based on the data collection,

analysis and recommendations. This includes insight into future course participant selection and/or decision making about course involvement and course improvement or continuation (Souster, 1992). This study may enable the ATA, as well as Strathcona County Board of Education, to modify and/or continue to maintain effectiveness as it proceeded through subsequent years of School Based Staff Development (SBSD) implementation.

Statement of The Problem

This study identifies participants' perceptions of Year 2 (Phases 3 & 4) of the Leadership in Professional Development Course offered by the Alberta Teachers' Association and implemented in Strathcona County Schools during the 1992-93 school year.

Subproblem 1). What do participants' perceive to be the strengths and weaknesses of the Leadership in Professional Development Course?

Subproblem 2). What do participants perceive to be the factors in maintaining an effective school-based staff development program?

Definition of Terms

Participants of the Leadership in Professional Development (LPD) Course consist of one teacher and one administrator from each participating school which had volunteered to implement a School-Based Professional Development Program within their school. Participants are also referred to as lead teachers.

Respondents are those participants who voluntarily agreed to share their thoughts and experiences for the purpose of this study.

Perceptions will be defined as respondents' views towards the program, its implementation, and its objectives and outcomes which are based on a person's ordinary way of thinking and feeling about and acting in such a situation (Pansegrau, 1983).

The individual school program consists of the implementation all of the activities planned and carried out by each of the participating schools which extend beyond the two year duration of the LPD Course in their attempts at improving the quality of instruction to their students.

The LPD Course consists of twelve half day workshops spread over a two year, four phase course, offering participants the opportunity to learn leadership techniques and processes which would empower them and their staffs to plan, to implement and to evaluate their own school-based professional development programs.

School-based staff development (SBSD) is professional development (PD) described as the collective set of experiences involving the individuals and the context in which they work. It is defined as those processes that improve the job-related knowledge, skills or attitudes. It is based on participant identified needs and concerns and has the potential to transform not only teaching practice but school organization (Alberta Teachers' Association, 1991) School-based is synonymous with school-focused for the purpose of this research.

The Need For The Study

There was a need for this study of participants in the Leadership in Professional Development Program for several reasons. First, the initiatives in the Strategic Plan, Towards 2000, had identified cause and provision for ongoing school-based professional development and formative evaluation of the same (Strathcona County Schools, 1991).

This study has met the requirements of the action plan which referred to "evaluating the Staff Development Program annually using employee and group data collection including (but not limited to) surveys, and individual and group comments" (Strathcona County Schools, 1991). Based on the research, one concern has been the lack of maintenance of an effective school-based Professional Development program (Joyce, Showers, & Rolheiser-Bennett, 1987; McQuarrie Jr. & Wood, 1991). Most people agree that evaluation of professional development is necessary, yet there have been few attempts to do more than measure "happiness coefficients" at the completion of workshops (Loucks-Horsley, et al, 1987), and even though most programs go through a summative evaluation, it has been indicated that not nearly enough formative evaluation of programs exists (Joyce & Showers, 1980; Calvert & Crouse, 1987; Pansegrau, 1983). The process of maintenance is extremely important and must not be overlooked if the efforts are to last (Duke, 1990; Sparks,1992).

Second, there was a need to identify why teachers believed were the benefits of involvement in this program, and what those benefits might be. The participants as well as others involved in the process of school-based staff development could benefit from the findings of this study in a formative as well as summative process.

Finally, research indicates a need to delve into the thought processes of those involved in staff development to enable more effective processes of professional development planning, involvement, implementation and evaluation (Pansegrau, 1983; Lieberman & Miller, 1979; Pawluk, 1988). The need to understand the participants' perceptions of the program was valuable as the participants were in the position to provide the most effective feedback on the program, because they were directly involved in its implementation.

The Scope of The Study

The total population of 24 participants consisted of two staff members from each of 11 participating schools with the exception of two schools which had three participants, representing all three levels of elementary and secondary education. This study consisted of data being gathered from particpants who were involved in Year 2 (Phases 3 and 4) of the LPD Course, who had participated in Year 1 (Phases 1 and 2) during the previous school year. This resulted in 19 eligible participants of which 9 participants volunteered to participate in the study.

The pilot study consisted of interviewing the Supervisor of Staff Development and one of the 19 eligible participants of the program. The data obtained from these two additional respondents resulted in ten respondents' data being used in the findings.

This study did not include participants who were in Year 1 (Phases 1 & 2).

Assumptions of the Study

Several assumptions had been made for this study. First, it was assumed that the respondents would offer accurate and honest responses to both the interview questions as well as their reasons for not participating in the study. Second, it is assumed that the respondents from the 6 schools represented are representative of the entire population of 28 schools in Strathcona County. Finally, it is also assumed that participants who had been involved in both Year 1 and Year 2 of the LPD Course would possess increased knowledge and skills and offer more pertinent and relevant data than participants who had entered midway through the course and had not particpated in the six first year sessions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Leadership in Professional Development Course provided leadership in the school setting to establish an effective school-based professional development program, which has been identified as the most beneficial and effective method of implementation (Joyce and Showers, 1980; Byrne, 1983). The leadership training process has been supported as an integral strength of the school-based professional development innovation. Without training of lead teachers, the balance of the staff will wander through the process of trial and error to achieve success in professional development (Levine & Broude, 1989; Byrne, 1983). The purpose of training leaders is to prevent blind attempts at reform or innovation. It is to guide key, influential individuals (lead teachers) in the school setting in establishing a school-based committee to address the individual, school and system concerns congruently (Levine & Broude, 1989; Byrne, 1983). Teachers, like all learners, require guided practice and feedback to refine and to confirm new instructional practices (Joyce and Showers, 1982).

Strathcona County has supported the innovation of school-based staff development (SBSD) and appeared to have prepared appropriately as Byrne (1983) states: Setting the Stage for Change-Strategies for Success. He makes the following suggestions.

> 1. Take time to identify all the influential parties in the school structuring process, and involve them all.
>
> 2. When you are starting out, find some sympathetic people in other districts who have gone through similar processes of change.
>
> 3. Examine the education research behind whatever new approaches you propose to adopt. If you ignore the research at the outset and proceed on your hunches alone, your attempt at reform might simply worsen the district's problems.
>
> 4. Allow time to set the stage for change. Use that time to train your staff, and to market the plan to your community.

> 5. Assign one person (or more if your district's size warrants it) to shepherd the restructuring project, to attack obstacles as they arise, and to oversee all operations (including gathering and processing the data).

Strathcona County had developed and regularly revised its strategic plan with input from all private and public sectors. These included industry, community, business, education and government. Through the use of studies such as Drader's (1989) comparison of site-based professional development in other jurisdictions, and the assignment of the Supervisor of Staff Development to compile and review the pertinant literature, Strathcona County was able to justify the innovation of SBSD implementation.

The implementation of the Leadership in Professional Development Course (LPDC) with 10 of 28 schools volunteering allowed for gradual marketing and buy-in of the concept of SBSD within the system. The SBSD innovation was monitored and supported by the Supervisor of Staff Development.

This alone is not sufficient to ensure a successful PD program. Another requirement is that it must have ongoing support for the long term. Based on Pawluk's research, it is recommended that the school system should have a long-term plan for professional development so that the activities offered follow and support a theme rather than a series of disconnected offerings. This plan should be made available to the teachers so they know what to expect (1988). Improvements are not sustained without specific system-wide commitments, support structures, and consistent monitoring (Levine & Broude, 1989).

Once a group of teachers or administrators has become skilled in a staff development practice, participants can promote and expand the practice by training others. Not only does the training-of-trainers design require trainers to possess a complete understanding of the method to be taught, but it necessitates increasingly complex skills needed to instruct others (Levine & Broude, 1989).

School-Based Staff Development and the Change Process

As changes occur in education on a continual basis, educators must be at the forefront of the processes, and be involved in the continual improvement of the educational process. One such area which allows education to continuously improve is the the area of Staff Development. It relates to the adult learners in the change process for the primary purpose of improving the quality of education offered to the students. Furthermore, it considers all aspects of the adult learners' methods of learning (Arin-Krupp, 1989; Valencia & Killion, 1988) which have also been evident in the processes and techniques utilized in the LPD Course.

As teachers are at various levels of career stages, each has his unique life experiences and needs which cannot be dealt with in a single group process (Arin-Krupp, 1989). Researchers clearly identify pedagogy and androgogy in making the point that adults do learn differently than children. Adults have their own life experiences often referred to as 'baggage' which affect their decisions and learning processes differently than children (Arin-Krupp, 1989; Valencia & Killion, 1988). Participants will negate the best staff development unless staff developers consider individual needs, learning approaches, and developmental needs of the learners. Working with adults may produce stress because adults define their own ideas of excellence. Knowing yourself and others minimizes that stress, maximizes effectiveness, and makes both the staff developer and the staff member more productive and more professional (Arin-Krupp, 1989).

It has been suppported that these components of an effective SBSD program are crucial to the success of an innovation such as the LPD Course. Without them, the innovation would not survive the time tested processes supported by the literature. Pawluk's research recommends:

> "Several teachers from one staff should be allowed to go to a professional activity together. Adult learners like activities that are social in nature, and attending activities in groups accommodates this need. Moreover, once back in the school setting, the teachers have someone with whom to share ideas, concerns, and materials" (1988).

The research also indicates that administrative support (Moser, 1990; Sparks,1992; McQuarrie & Wood, 1991), financial and time support (Duke, 1990; Joyce & Showers, 1982; Jones,1992) and establishing goals (Joyce & Showers, 1982; Duke, 1990;) are three key factors in the ongoing success. Teachers themselves must also have adequate input into the change process (Duke, 1990; Joyce & Showers, 1982) if it is to be successful.

Another factor of effective SBSD programs is the empowering of teachers in the process of professional development. It has been identified as the most effective process (Valencia & Killion, 1988; Wood, 1989), but this must not result in the absolute disregard of the system's input of goals and objectives (Wood, 1989). Input must be from all those involved to be of optimum benefit. Even though teachers want to make their own decisions, they must consider their school and system goals to implement consistently effective innovations (Wood, 1989; Alberta Teachers' Association, 1991).

Professional development programs should be based on needs identified by the participants. Knowledge about the nature of adult learners and about change support the conclusion that most teachers wish to be involved in deciding the direction of their professional development. Top-down programs do not reflect the needs of participants as accurately as programs determined by the participants (Alberta Teachers' Association, 1991) The central office is no longer totally responsible for deciding the who, what, how, and when of change. Decisions about which specific improvements are to be implemented in schools should be made by faculty members in each school. The central office management team facilitates rather than directs this decision. Top district administrators

identify procedures, as well as provide and manage resources that enable principals and their teachers to implement improvement plans (Wood, 1989).

Weaknesses that can effect an innovation and destroy the efforts and achievements are also identified in the literature. Change fosters a temporary feeling of incompetence in even the most competent teachers. The threatening aspects of change are likely to be met with defensive behaviors and resistance to learning (Valencia and Killion, 1988). While there may be concerns about teachers' motivations and willingness to learn, many committed teachers are willing and able to withstand the discomfort involved in new learning and change (Joyce and Showers, 1982). Change is a process, not an event (Joyce & Showers, 1982; Byrne, 1983; Valencia & Killion, 1988), and as a professional development process, it takes time (Joyce & Showers, 1982; Byrne, 1983; Valencia & Killion, 1988; Pawluk, 1988), which supports the ongoing long-term aspect of implementation of the SBSD innovation in Strathcona County.

The ultimate benefit of an innovation is directly related to the effects on students and are the key to measuring the quality of an educational endeavor. Teachers and parents sometimes wonder if students know that schools are supposed to be places for learning. A powerful way to communicate this message is for teachers and administrators to be models of learning as well as teaching. Therefore, the school becomes a place of learning for all (Kent, Austin, & Kaufman, 1989), a community of learners.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Method

Qualitative methods of research in education have only recently been accepted and fully recognized as viable means of conducting valuable research (Spradley, 1980). The social phenomena of human behavior appeared to be lacking in education until the last decade (Patton, 1987), as little research of this type in this area was available. As sociologists have studied societies and cultures, to get to the "meaning of" what these cultures do, there is a movement in education to do the same. To get to the "meaning things have" in professional development, educators will enable themselves and others such as organizers and planners to better accommodate and understand the needs of those involved (Pansegrau, 1983; Valencia & Killion, 1988).

The basis for choosing the interview as the method of collecting data rests on the ability to get to the "meaning things have" for the participants (Spradley, 1980). Through the interview process it was possible to delve beyond the explicit knowledge and reasons which participants use to make their decisions. It offers an opportunity to examine the tacit knowledge and reasons for which the participants act as they do (Spradley, 1980), getting involved as leaders in the field of professional development. The purpose of interviewing, according to Patton

> is to find out what is in and on someone else's mind ...it is NOT to put things in someone's mind (for example, the interviewer's preconceived categories for organizing the world) but rather to access the perspective of the person being interviewed. We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. The issue is not whether observational data is more desirable, valid, or meaningful than self-reported data. The fact of the matter is that we cannot observe everything. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions ... the purpose of interviewing then is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. The assumption is that the perspective is meaningful, knowledgeable and able to be made explicit.(1980:196)

The interview schedule was derived from a review of the pertinent literature, selection and development of the most appropriate questions from such studies as Pansegrau (1983), Souster (1992), and Joyce, et al (1977). Methods of interviewing were developed based on the problem statement and the purpose of the study.

An additional informal source of information for this study was the process of participant observation. It offered the researcher the ability to verify, through observation and participation, what the participants said was occurring to what was actually occurring in the Leadership in Professional Development Course.

Selection of Participants

Authorization by the Superintendent of Schools was granted (Appendix A) prior to setting up and conducting the pilot and participant interviews. The interviews were conducted at locations mutually agreed upon and convenient to the participants and researcher.

The pilot study consisted of interviewing the Supervisor of Staff Development and one of the 24 participants of the program. The remaining 23 participants were requested by letter, telephone, or in person to volunteer for this study. Six of the 23 were not eligible as they had not participated in the course during year one, but were selected by their principals or had volunteered to assume the position of lead teacher at their school for the second year of the LPD Course. Eight of a possible 17 participants responded and agreed to participate in the research study. Refer to Table 1.

A signed letter of information and consent (Appendix B) was required prior to participation in the study which included their consent to participate in this study; the selection of participants; the approximate duration of interview; their right to opt out at any

point of the study; the taping of interviews and the erasing of tapes upon validation of scripts by respondents; the use of quotations; and the conditions of anonymity.

Although it was necessary to use respondents' quotations in the research findings, the respondents were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality throughout the study as the data would be viewed and processed only by the researcher and reviewed by the research committee. The tapes were erased upon validation of the scripts by the respondents. Interpretation and analysis of results are void of names of participants and schools, as the researcher has avoided all attempts to deceive or distort any of the findings of the study, honoring the participants' dignity and privacy.

Data Collection, Interpretation and Analysis

Iterview data was collected with the use of a tape recorder, with permission (Appendix B), and interview fieldnotes. The field notes complemented the process of data collection, analysis and interpretation. The participants were requested to review the script of the data for validity and accuracy. Collection, analysis and interpretation of data was carried out according to Berg (1989) and Patton's (1987) methods of qualitative inquiry.

Through in-depth interviewing (Pansegrau, 1983; Souster, 1992), it was anticipated that these broad questions would encourage participants to share their true feelings and views about the program, its implementation, and their involvement in it. The complete interview schedule including probe questions appears in Appendix C.

Questions as they relate to:

Sub Problem 1)

1). What do you perceive to be the strengths and weaknesses of the Leadership in Professional Development (LPD) Course?

Sub Problem 2)

2). What do you perceive to be the factors of an effective school-based staff development (SBSD) program?

Sub Problem 1 and 2)

3) What are your attitudes and beliefs towards the LPD Course?

Planned Presentation of Results

The results of this research in the thesis form may be used by the Alberta Teachers' Association (A.T.A.) Professional Development Committee as a summative evaluation to improve the Leadership in Professional Development Course to better meet the needs of participants. The results may also be used to assist the Superintendent, the Supervisor of Staff Development, Human Resources, and staff in Strathcona County in the formative evaluation of SBSD program involvement and to maintain their commitment to funding and involvement of subsequent involvement if it is warranted.

This research occurred during Year 2 of a SBSD program which required three to five years to completely implement and to expect valuable results (Pawluk, 1988). Hence, the research was formative. The LPD course itself consisted of only two years of involvement in scheduled workshops: hence, the research was summative. The participants would better understand the requirements of, and commitment to, the program as well as their views and reasons for involvement in the LPD course and the longer term program of school-based professional development, resulting in improved practices and outcomes (Lieberman & Miller, 1979; Pansegrau, 1983; Marshall, 1988).

CHAPTER IV

THE RESULTS

Through the use of in depth interviews, the purpose of this study was to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Leadership in Professional Development (LPD) Course in order to improve the course to better serve the needs of their students during the implementation of school-based staff development (SBSD) in their respective schools (Souster, 1992), This was achieved by inquiring into the participants' perceptions of the course and their reasons for getting involved and actively promoting and implementing a SBSD program at their school. This would assist the decision makers at various levels of administration and involvement (individual teacher, as well as subject area, school, system and program presenters) to improve the processes based on the data collection, analysis and recommendations.

The respondents were extremely willing and enthusiastic to share their experiences as they felt it would benefit those participants who would subsequently be involved in the LPD Course and the SBSD program. This characteristic is consistent with that of leaders in the field of education as they thought of sharing their experiences without hesitation or selfishness. Levine & Broude have stated: as trainers are trained and train others, participants refine old skills and learn new ones. In the process, they report a sense of energy and rekindled enthusiasm (1989).

The respondents felt comfortable, as each interview was conducted at a location of their choice which occurred within their own school offices, conference rooms or classrooms. The result was a non-threatening atmosphere where the respondents felt relaxed and more willing to share their true feelings about the LPD Course and their SBSD program. This method was also supported in the literature that, when gently pushed, teachers will talk about feelings of ambivalence, conflict, and frustration in the day-to-day

activities of their work (Lieberman & Miller, 1979). This resulted in responses which appeared to delve beyond the explicit reasons for involvement and perceptions.

Table 1 identifies the school levels, total population, eligible population, and number of respondents from each school. The table also clearly indicates that it was more likely that both the teacher and administrator from the same school volunteered to particpate in the study than only one participating as noted from schools E and F. This appeared to be consistant with the administrators' attitude towards professional growth and development of local expertise.

Table #1.

POPULATION DICHOTOMY

T=TEACHERS
A=ADMINISTRATORS
ELEM=ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
JR=JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
SR=SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

	POPULATION					
	TOTAL		ELIGIBLE		RESPONDENTS	
SCHOOL	T	A	T	A	T	A
A. SR	1	1	1	1	1	1
B. ELEM	1	1	1	1	1	1
C. ELEM	1	1	1	1	1	1
D. ELEM	2	1	2	1	1	0
E. ELEM	1	2	0	2	0	1
F. ELEM	1	1	0	1	0	1
G. ELEM	1	1	1	1	0	0
H. JR	1	1	1	1	0	0
I. ELEM	1	1	1	0	0	0
J. JR	1	1	1	0	0	0
K. SR	1	1	0	0	0	0
SUB TOTAL	12	12	9	9	4	5
SUPERVISOR OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT		1		1		1
TOTAL	12	13	9	10	4	6

Nine of the eligible participants refused to participate for one main reason. They had indicated a lack of time, or inability to fit an interview into their already busy schedules. These participants continued to stress time availability as their reasons even after the researcher contacted them several times to request their participation in the study, or as it turned out, to confirm their lack of time availability.

Analysis of Interview Responses

The data was first open-coded according to Berg who suggested asking a specific and consistent set of questions (1989) which were derived from the interview schedule, and all the data fit into these broad questions which relate to the LPD course and the implementation of SBSD in the participating schools. Categories which were identified through the coding and analysis process with the number of respondents out of 10 identifying that issue as relevant.

Table #2

INITIAL CATEGORIES

Of a possible 10 respondents.

CATEGORIES IDENTIFIED BY RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY
A. What are the perceived strengths of the LPD program?	
1. The course itself was excellent.	10
2. The course material is directly applicable to staff and students.	9
3. A relevant focus has created ownership and empowerment.	7
4. The program is meeting the needs of staff.	7
5. Students are ultimately receiving the benefits of this program.	6
6. Opportunities for sharing and support are created through networks.	5
7. The program could be tailored to meet individual and school needs.	5
8. Professional growth was emphasized.	5
9. This program is a return to an efficient method of delivering SD.	3
B. What are the perceived weaknesses of the LPD program?	
1. The needs that exist are abundant and differ greatly among schools and staff.	4
2. Flexibility was lacking regarding PD time.	4
3. Support from staff, administrators and most importantly, from the system in the form of financial and time support was deficient.	4
C. What perceived benefits are derived from the LPD program?	

1. Meeting needs of students, staff/school and system. 10
2. Ownership of PD on a personal and professional growth level, risk taking. 10
3. Implementation with a long term focus. 8
4. Relevant needs surveys and action plans exist with consensus and collaboration. 8
5. Networks established for sharing successes and failures. 7
6. Creative problem solving, doing more with less, solutions. 5
7. Leadership candidates are developed. 3
8. Administrators are viewed as facilitators. 2

D. What are the perceived factors of a successful SBSD program?
1. Leadership must exist, as teams, be developed, facilitators, course availability, development of local expertise. 9
2. Support must exist from the system, administrators, staff, parents, community, through financial, time, moral and professional support. 8
3. Empowerment and ownership of needs identification and implementation of activities to reach goals, is a voluntary process. 7
4. Long range on-going planning must exist with clear focus and direction. 6
5. Needs must be clearly identified collaboratively and efforts to achieve them clearly defined. 6
6. Networks must exist to enable sharing of successes and failures. 5

E. What perceived restrictions affect the progress of SBSD?
1. Resource availability, financial, personal. 10
2. Lack of support from system, administrators, staff/school: financial and time. 10
3. Staff resistance to change. 7
4. Lack of empowerment and ownership. 6
5. Poor time management and workload increase. 6
6. Needs differ, especially across elementary generalist, and high school specialist levels. 6
7. Lack of flexibility for PD times. 4

F. What is your progress to date in the implementation of SBSD in your school?
1. Committee established and needs surveys being done. 7
2. On-going long range relevant planning is taking place. 7
3. Professional growth and attitude improves. 5
4. Expertise level increases at local and school level. 5
5. Networks exist to share successes and failures. 5
6. Multiple thrusts exist, or is our goal. 4
7. Ownership and empowerment increase as staff sees results. 2
8. Not much done as of yet. 2

G. What are your reasons for involvement in the LPD program?
1. Professional growth. 3
2. Leadership development. 3
3. Self satisfaction. 3
4. Selfish reasons. 3
5. Part of my job description. 1

Upon further analysis of these broad questions Strauss (cited in Berg, 1989) suggests analyzing the data minutely and implementing axial coding. The findings of the study are discussed through the use of analysis and paraphrasing from the interview transcripts (Appendix D) as well as being supported by the literature. The researcher took extreme care to maintain the original context and intent of the responses.

Upon re-examining the data it was evident that there was a great deal of overlap in the initial coded items. This overlap resulted in generating a list of categories of specific issues related to the problem statement. The categories which were identified are listed in Table 3.

Table #3

FINAL CATEGORIES

Of a possible 10 respondents.

CATEGORIES	FREQUENCY
A. What are the perceived strengths of the LPD program?	
1. Opportunities for sharing and support are created through networks.	10
2. A relevant focus has created ownership and empowerment.	10
3. The course itself was excellent.	10
4. Professional growth was emphasized.	10
5. Students are ultimately receiving the benefits of this program.	10
6. The program could be tailored to meet individual and school needs.	9
7. The course material is directly applicable to staff and students.	9
8. Local expertise is increased.	9
9. Implementation of the program creates collaboration of staff.	8
10. A focused long-term plan is created.	9
11. This program is a return to an efficient method of delivering SD.	6
12. Leadership candidates are developed.	6
13. The system benefits through decentralization of responsibility.	6
B. What are the perceived weaknesses of the LPD program?	
1. The needs that exist are abundant and differ greatly among schools and staff.	8
2. Support from staff, administrators and most importantly, from the system in the form of financial and time support was deficient.	8
3. Flexibility was lacking regarding PD time.	5
C. What are the perceived factors of a successful SBSD program?	
1. Long range, on-going planning must exist with clearly defined needs, focus and direction.	10
2. Availability of local expertise resources must exist.	10
3. Empowerment and ownership of needs identification and implementation of activities to reach goals must exist.	10

4. Networks must exist to enable sharing of successes and failures.	10
5. Financial support must exist from the system and administration.	10
6. Flexibility of PD times must exist.	8
7. Involvement must be voluntary.	8
8. Support and buy-in from staff and parents, acceptance of change.	8
9. There must be staff consensus and collaboration.	8
10. Time must be managed efficiently.	8
11. Awareness of staff limitations.	6
12. Staff stability should exist.	5

Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses of the LPD Course

Perceived Strengths of the LPD Course and SBSD program

The analysis of the findings revealed several perceived strengths of the Leadership in Professional Development (LPD) Course as well as in the implementation of the School-Based Staff Development (SBSD) program in the respondents' respective schools. The most commonly perceived strengths were, first, as all ten respondents indicated, the participants were able to share their successes, failures and ideas with participants from other schools with the opportunity to learn from one another through networks. All the respondents felt this was the greatest strength of the program because they could compare stories and situations and select the best possible options to apply to their own situations. The findings were also supported by the literature in that as the training progressed, teachers requested more and more time for the small-group sharing and problem solving that began each class (Valencia and Killion, 1988).

Second, all respondents identified that working within an ongoing school-focused program created ownership and the ability to draw on staff strengths enabling them to better tailor their PD program to the needs of each individual staff. The staffs were able to plan for long term implementation as required with such programs as Lion's Quest or language learning. It was extremely important that the programs were school-focused because it provided a relevant focus. The direction was identified at the school level by the staff as opposed to system identified or planned. The result was a genuine feeling of ownership on

the part of the staff. They felt they were in control and it was their decision to procede, or not to procede on the identified needs according to their own SBSD plan.

These strengths are supported through the observation data as well as in the literature. Professional development programs should be based on needs identified by the participants. Knowledge about the nature of adult learners and about change support the conclusion that most teachers wish to be involved in deciding the direction of their professional development. Top-down programs do not reflect the needs of participants as accurately as programs determined by the participants (Alberta Teachers' Association, 1991).

When educators are given the freedom and opportunity to act as professionals rather than to have their every action prescribed, change occurs more readily (Valencia and Killion, 1988). Any improvement effort will be less successful or may even fail if the unique needs and individual differences of the learners are not addressed (McQuarrie Jr. and Wood, 1991). Individuals are complex; therefore meeting individual needs can be a difficult job. Adult learners fortunately share some common needs. All learners need a positive, growth-oriented environment in which to try new ideas; they also want practical and relevant new ideas oriented to their personal concerns (Arin-Krupp, 1989).

The findings have indicated that the participants perceive a clear understanding of their needs, and appreciate taking ownership of setting goals and objectives to meet their needs, both collectively and individually. All respondents believe that it is critical that they have ownership of the decision making process because they themselves know what their needs are. The system may know what is desired, but the staff know what is required as they are the ones in the classrooms with the students. As individuals experiencing the day-to-day events which create immediate and long term needs, the staff is better able to meet and collectively identify group needs, goals and objectives that will meet both individual as well as collective needs.

All of the respondents were extremely satisfied with the course and all it offered with regard to content, course instructor and applicability of the course content to their school situations, more so in the elementary schools than in the high schools. The course offered a tremendous amount of information and a resource list that was used extensively by some PD committees, and in some cases distributed to other staff members. These were made use of by staff according to their area of interest and need.

The instructor received numerous compliments for her efforts and expertise in presenting the course content and activities. She was described as dynamic, enthusiastic, extremely knowledgeable entertaining and animated as she conducted the course workshops.

Nine of ten respondents indicated that staff were able to draw upon expertise within their own schools which were developed as a result of staff being more enthused and interested in professional growth. Several staff members continued to pursue graduate studies as well as other professional growth oriented courses. This enabled the staff to tailor each specific PD plan to the school as well as to each individual staff member. This in turn was meeting the needs of each individual staff member.

Meeting these needs of the teachers through professional improvement and growth ultimately meets the needs of the students. By identifying what the students needed as far as program improvements, the staff were able to identify their own needs which in turn met the needs of the students. The emphasis upon "growth" rather than improvement can be an important distinction in the motivation of the staff member and the manner in which he or she accepts and addresses the plan that has been cooperatively established. When viewed as "growth," the teacher's educational activities are regarded as development; if viewed only as "required improvement," the teacher is more likely to consider recommendations as unilateral prescriptions to overcome assumed shortcomings (Byrne, 1983). When others are given the freedom and opportunity to act as professionals rather than having their every action prescribed, change occurs more readily (Valencia and Killion, 1988).

Professional development and continuous school improvement are complex and idiosyncratic processes. Although expected patterns can be described and promising conditions can be fostered, each learning design must be tailored to individuals, schools, and districts. The design must be allowed and expected to evolve over time. Providing thoughtfully-constructed staff development experiences for teachers and administrators will enhance performance and professionalism in adults and expand learning opportunities for students (Levine & Broude, 1989).

The applicability of the course content to the schools varied somewhat from elementary to high schools. The staff at high schools were still requiring more time to get buy-in from their staff in support of SBSD, whereas the elementary participants found it easier and noticed early buy-in and direct applicability of LPD course activities and content to their staffs' situations and needs. In some cases, the course techniques, activities and content was being utilized by participants directly in their classrooms with their students.

Seven of ten respondents who were elementary teachers and administrators specifically indicated that they were pleased that the system was returning to an efficient method of delivery of staff development. In revisiting the past, as the system had school-based staff development (SBSD) a decade prior to and through the development of the strategic plan, the system is making a concerted effort to effectively and efficiently implement SBSD. The participants who had worked for the system for at least ten years in the elementary schools expressed their pleasure in returning to SBSD.

Student Response to Innovation

With the use of the probe questions, it was possible to gain additional insight into participants' views of the program. One probe question requested information regarding students' response to changes occurring in the school. Seven of the respondents perceived their students were receiving benefits from the implementation of the SBSD program in areas such as learning outcomes, well managed classrooms and quality of instruction even

though the students were oblivious to the efforts. Administrators indicated they see good things happening in their teachers' classrooms with many activities directly related to the SBSD activities in which the staff were involved. Teacher participants noted as well that their students were improving in their math skills, writing skills and general learning outcomes. This was also a direct spin off of the teachers being involved in PD activities of specific skills and techniques directly related to the improvement required in the students. The result was improved student performance, supporting that the benefits would ultimately be student oriented.

Respondents from two schools did indicate there was not any impact on their students yet, but expected that there would be at a later date. This, in most part, was due to the fact that SBSD implementation at their school was still at an early stage of planning.

All ten of the respondents indicated the key benefit to the school staffs is that they are developing a feeling of ownership and responsibility of their own PD needs. This has been accomplished through collegiality and collaboration of staff in identifying their needs and developing long range plans for implementation of PD thrusts. These opportunities are also encouraging staffs to develop their individual as well as group expertise and become lead teachers in their areas of interest and strength. These benefits were mentioned in the previous section referring to strengths of the program.

The findings indicate that elementary schools are implementing the SBSD program at a higher level and are noticing greater changes in their students. This is largely due to the fact that the PD activities of the elementary staffs are ongoing and students based, a direct applicability to specific needs of the elementary teachers, as previously mentioned.

Elementary staffs are generalists and they feel it is easier to build continuity and consensus on a staff due to the overlap of each division. High schools, on the other hand, are specialists and are not as interested in SBSD. They would rather see efforts to improve their teaching skills for their own programs or specializations than efforts of a general or

whole school nature. Schools which are still in the early stages of planning and implementation are not at the point of noticing any benefits to the students.

Benefits of the Program

The use of another probe question revealed additional strengths of the program. The benefits identified were to the participants, to the school and also to the system.

There appeared to be a great deal of benefit to the participants in that they attended the course and received an abundance of valuable information, resources and knowledge which directly apply to working with their staffs and students. Personal satisfaction, professional growth and having their own needs met are the key benefits mentioned by the participants. The opportunity to take the LPD course and be a part of the leadership team at their school increased the enthusiasm of the decision making committee on their staff.

These perceived benefits are consistent with the literature which supports ownership and empowerment at the school level developing efficient SBSD programs. As stated by Wood, the central office no longer is totally responsible for deciding the who, what, how, and when of change. Decisions about which specific improvements are to be implemented in schools should be made by faculty members in each school. The central office management team facilitates rather than directs this decision. Top district administrators identify procedures as well as provide and manage resources that enable principals and their teachers to implement improvement plans (1989).

The perceived benefits to the system that were identified by six of the respondents were, first, an increase in local expertise available throughout the system, which would ultimately improve the quality of education imparted to the students; and secondly, the perceived cost benefits of decentralizing the responsibility of PD to the schools without the financial resources to accompany the responsibilities. This benefit, however, is not necessarily a benefit to the staff or the schools, and is mentioned as a concern of system support in the section referring to the weaknesses of the program. The literature of Levine

and Broude supports these perceptions that improvements are not sustained without specific system-wide commitments, support structures, and consistent monitoring (1989). Too often the very best teachers, who earn the most positive evaluations, are allowed to limit their influence to the children fortunate enough to be enrolled in their classes (Byrne, 1983).

Perceived Weaknesses of the LPD Course

Although the perceived weaknesses of the LPD program were fewer than the perceived strengths, four participants did identify isolated concerns which were not consistent with the other respondents. This in itself indicated that the needs and concerns differ among the schools involved, as well as eight of the respondents indicated that one of the most important weaknesses of the program was that the needs that exist are abundant and differ greatly among the schools and staffs. The school structure, school culture, staff make-up, location, environments and morale all differ and all contribute to the respondents' perceived needs and concerns.

Other weaknesses which were apparently of greater concern to eight respondents were in the areas of the flexibility of the PD times available and the financial support offered by the system. Consistency with the literature was again apparent in the perceived weaknesses. Pawluk's research recommends: "The school system should limit the amount of change it wants to make at any one time. When the school system implements a new program, the teachers' concerns should be cared for before another program is initiated which places new demands on the teachers" (1988). He further recommends: "Opportunities must be provided for participants to get together to review the concepts and materials presented in the professional development activities, especially when a new program is being implemented. These follow-up activities can be used to solve problems or to discuss concerns encountered during implementation" (1988).

The perception of eight respondents was that the decentralization of the program and related responsibilities to the schools was occurring without decentralizing any budget to support the innovation. This has created a greater burden on the schools and has required creative problem solving at its best. An in-service program of this dimension will succeed only if there is specific task orientation and positive leadership at the district level. Everyone, including the board of education, must appreciate, and concur, in the need for staff training and development and take the action necessary for effective implementation (Byrne, 1983). Improvements are not sustained without specific system-wide commitments, support structures, and consistent monitoring (Levine & Broude, 1989).

Regarding the flexibility of PD time offered to schools, five respondents were pleased the system recognized a need and converted one of the two fixed PD days to a "flex day" which could be taken any day during the year which was chosen by the staff of that school. This would enable the staff to access resource people that could otherwise be booked by other schools requiring the same sessions or workshops, and set the day up when they felt it fit and could be best utilized in their ongoing SBSD plan. The concern, however, was that this was still a "day" of PD and was not consistent with the literature or philosophy of effective SBSD. Successful staff development is context-sensitive. That is, efforts to change teacher behaviors should be directed to the context in which teachers do their work. The context can be a source of information about what might be addressed, about the best ways of moving ahead, about potential problems, and so forth. If staff development ignores context, as is the case in many one-shot workshops or brief visits by "experts", it probably will not be as successful as staff development that is deeply connected to schools and classrooms of participants (Griffin, 1987).

Several perceived weaknesses appeared to be concerns isolated to the individual schools, or the participants' own perceptions lacking consistency and support with other participants, albeit with significance to these individuals. A concern such as "too much to

read" was not supported by any other participants and could have possibly been interpreted by the participant as an abundance of resources available to their committee and school.

Perceived Factors of an Effective SBSD Program

Factors of an Effective School-Based Staff Development Program

C 1 Several factors were identified in the data which the respondents consistently indicated were significant with regard to an effective SBSD Program. The ongoing nature of effective staff development was perceived to be critical to all of the respondents including items such as flexibility of PD dates and times which would enable the staff to plan and implement portions of their plan when it would fit best into their schedule of planned events. Making the SBSD program at each participating school as well as the leadership course long term would also improve the effectiveness by offering increased time to implement and accomplish the desired objectives of each SBSD program..

The resources were identified by all ten respondents as another key factor in areas such as the availability of experts within the schools and the school system. This program encourages staff to pursue PD activities that encourage and develop professional growth. Some of these resources are the networks that were created and required as well as the sharing that occurred as a result, and finally the financial resources in the form of support from the system and administrators. Pawluk's research recommends: "Opportunities must be provided for participants to get together to review the concepts and materials presented in the professional development activities, especially when a new program is being implemented. These follow-up activities can be used to solve problems or to discuss concerns encountered during implementation" (1988). Another factor is was the support and buy-in from staff and parents. Byrne identifies several points which support the findings of this study:

> In addition to each teacher's individual needs, a second key influence must be regarded as a planning consideration- that is, the goals of the school system and the objectives it has established to meet these goals. In addition,

> the superintendent should establish the overall direction of the program in light of the goals of the school system.
>
> First, in-service at the local level must primarily be teacher oriented and teacher centered. It should arise from needs that are pinpointed by the staff and guided and developed by a staff committee.
>
> Second, the program must be characterized by diversity and flexibility. What is informative for one teacher is often not appropriate for another.
>
> Third, the program should result in a planned, sequential activity for each individual in which one in-service activity is linked to another, and one year's program is linked to that of the following year.
>
> Finally, in-service should be well prepared around those specific training requirements that each individual sees as important and relevant to his own professional development(1983).

Restrictions Affecting the Progress of the SBSD Program

The first probe question regarding restrictions identified support of the antithesis of the factors of an effective SBSD Program. There were some key issues that emerged. First, all ten respondents identified a lack of support from the system and the administration. Second, some external restrictions are changes in curriculum and availability of resources. Finally, seven respondents indicated that within internal restrictions exist staff ownership, consensus, staff stability, time management, and general resistance to change.

Reasons to Terminate the Program

As an additional probe question, the reasons for a participant to drop out of the course or program revealed concerns that were consistent with the respondents who disclosed the same reasons without the probe question resulting in all ten respondents agreeing. The broad categories were, first, a lack of support from the system from administrators and from staff and second, some participant concerns about acceptance of change, specialization, multi-visions or overload, and saturation level. All of these were

supported in the findings in previous sections of the results under weaknesses, factors of effective SBSD programs, and restrictions affecting the progress of the SBSD program.

Participants' Involvement as Viewed by Staff Members

The third probe question revealed several additional factors which are clearly distinguishable between administrators and teachers. All five of the administrators perceived that others viewed them as enthusiastic facilitators who were always available for their staff when needed, and did not force the issues or responsibilities upon the staff. They believed they allowed teachers to work at their own pace without interference.

All four of the teachers, however, perceived that they themselves were viewed as interested staff members who are always the ones to be involved and also the ones who are expected to be involved. It appeared that teachers who had been involved in PD for several years had set a precedent and their colleauges expected them to continue, especially if the colleagues were too busy themselves. One participant expressed the concern that some staff members were possibly disappointed that they were not given the chance to volunteer for the position of participant in the LPD course.

Attitudes and Beliefs Towards the LPD Course

The balance of the research questions were used to solicit additional responses when it appeared that the respondents were hesitant or had difficulty identifying strengths, weaknesses, benefits and perceived factors of an effective SBSD Program. As probe questions, these were not presented to all participants for previously mentioned reasons. However, they did disclose consistent perceptions as well as additional responses. Attitudes and beliefs fell into specific categories pertaining to the course and its implementation. The result was that all respondents indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the content, presenter and strategies in an ongoing process of learning, with some anxiety to get finished with the course and get things implemented at their own schools.

Participants' Reasons for Getting Involved

In addition to the responses to how their involvement was viewed by others, the four teacher participants consistently identified the reasons for involvement as meeting personal and professional improvement goals, being asked or being expected to be involved while the five administrators indicated it was their responsibility to be involved in the PD at their school.

The participants of the LPD Course were specifically the leaders on their staffs, both administrators and teachers who had the desire to help others and themselves to develop themselves in an ongoing process of professional growth. They had bought in to the program and recognized the benefits of implementing a SBSD Program at their respective schools.

Are Needs Being Met?

Based on the strengths and weaknesses as well as the factors of an effective SBSD program, Seven of the respondents referred to the meeting of needs in the previous findings. The entire group of respondents indicated their needs were being met to some extent along a continuum which ranged from some of their needs being met, to their needs are being met. Administrators indicated the development of leadership candidates and creative solutions as additional needs being met.

Views on Course Details

Satisfaction with the LPD Course was the general perception. Respondents indicated several specific factors such as quality of content, expertise of presenter, and opportunity to share as some of the greatest benefits and strengths of the LPD Course.

Drive to be a Lead Teacher

The responses to this probe question were again consistent with the strengths of the program and the factors of an effective SBSD Program. The factors which drive these participants to be lead teachers is their desire to be the best teachers possible, continuously improving their skills, and sharing their skills and knowledge with others to improve the quality of education imparted to their students.

Progress to Date

The extent of implementation within the SBSD program varies between schools represented by the respondents in this research. This variance ranges from one school PD committee just having chosen a topic to other schools with several initiatives or thrusts. It is clearly indicated in the findings that the elementary schools have made more progress in the SBSD program than the high schools. This appears to stem from the fact that elementary staffs have always seen the benefits of SBSD and are welcoming this model back into the system. They have never allowed SBSD to disappear from their actual PD plans. They have maintained a professional attitude by continuing to meet before school, at lunch and at staff meetings just to feel confident they are doing the best they can do in their classrooms as professionals. Long range plans have been developed by the elementary staffs which also reflect their advanced involvement in the SBSD program.

Based on the nature of this research and the fact that respondents were strictly participants, according to Souster, the participants usually perceived there was more progress at a much higher level of use than did their colleagues in the same schools (1992). Without empirical data obtained through interviews or questionnaires from the school staffs of the participating schools, it is not possible to accurately identify the Levels of Use according to Loucks-Horsley (1987).

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Interview Responses

Through the use of in depth interviews, the purpose of this study was to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Leadership in Professional Development (LPD) Course in order to improve the course to better serve the needs of their students during the implementation of school-based staff development (SBSD) in their respective schools (Souster, 1992), This was achieved by inquiring into the participants' perceptions of the course and their reasons for getting involved and actively promoting and implementing a SBSD program at their school. This would assist the decision makers at various levels of administration and involvement (individual teacher, as well as subject area, school, system and program presenters) to improve the processes based on the data collection, analysis and recommendations.

The respondents were extremely willing and enthusiastic to share their experiences as they felt it would benefit those participants who would subsequently be involved in the LPD Course and the SBSD program. This characteristic is consistent with that of leaders in the field of education as they thought of sharing their experiences without hesitation or selfishness. Levine & Broude have stated: as trainers are trained and train others, participants refine old skills and learn new ones. In the process, they report a sense of energy and rekindled enthusiasm (1989).

The respondents felt comfortable, as each interview was conducted at a location of their choice which occurred within their own school offices, conference rooms or classrooms. The result was a non-threatening atmosphere where the respondents felt relaxed and more willing to share their true feelings about the LPD Course and their SBSD

program. This method was also supported in the literature that, when gently pushed, teachers will talk about feelings of ambivalence, conflict, and frustration in the day-to-day activities of their work (Lieberman & Miller, 1979). This resulted in responses which appeared to delve beyond the explicit reasons for involvement and perceptions.

Table 1 identifies the school levels, total population, eligible population, and number of respondents from each school. The table also clearly indicates that it was more likely that both the teacher and administrator from the same school volunteered to particpate in the study than only one participating as noted from schools E and F. This appeared to be consistant with the administrators' attitude towards professional growth and development of local expertise.

Nine of the eligible participants refused to participate for one main reason. They had indicated a lack of time, or inability to fit an interview into their already busy schedules. These participants continued to stress time availability as their reasons even after the researcher contacted them several times to request their participation in the study, or as it turned out, to confirm their lack of time availability.

Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses of the LPD Course

Perceived Strengths of the LPD Course and SBSD program

The analysis of the findings revealed several perceived strengths of the Leadership in Professional Development (LPD) Course as well as in the implementation of the School-Based Staff Development (SBSD) program in the respondents' respective schools. The most commonly perceived strengths were, first, as all ten respondents indicated, the participants were able to share their successes, failures and ideas with participants from other schools with the opportunity to learn from one another through networks. All the respondents felt this was the greatest strength of the program because they could compare stories and situations and select the best possible options to apply to their own situations.

The findings were also supported by the literature in that as the training progressed, teachers requested more and more time for the small-group sharing and problem solving that began each class (Valencia and Killion, 1988).

Second, all respondents identified that working within an ongoing school-focused program created ownership and the ability to draw on staff strengths enabling them to better tailor their PD program to the needs of each individual staff. The staffs were able to plan for long term implementation as required with such programs as Lion's Quest or language learning. It was extremely important that the programs were school-focused because it provided a relevant focus. The direction was identified at the school level by the staff as opposed to system identified or planned. The result was a genuine feeling of ownership on the part of the staff. They felt they were in control and it was their decision to procede, or not to procede on the identified needs according to their own SBSD plan. As individuals experiencing the day-to-day events which create immediate and long term needs, the staff is better able to meet and collectively identify group needs, goals and objectives that will meet both individual as well as collective needs.

All of the respondents were extremely satisfied with the course and all it offered with regard to content, course instructor and applicability of the course content to their school situations, more so in the elementary schools than in the high schools. The course offered a tremendous amount of information and a resource list that was used extensively by some PD committees, and in some cases distributed to other staff members. These were made use of by staff according to their area of interest and need.

Nine of ten respondents indicated that staff were able to draw upon expertise within their own schools which were developed as a result of staff being more enthused and interested in professional growth. Several staff members continued to pursue graduate studies as well as other professional growth oriented courses. This enabled the staff to tailor each specific PD plan to the school as well as to each individual staff member. This in turn was meeting the needs of each individual staff member.

Meeting these needs of the teachers through professional improvement and growth ultimately meets the needs of the students. By identifying what the students needed as far as program improvements, the staff were able to identify their own needs which in turn met the needs of the students. The emphasis upon "growth" rather than improvement can be an important distinction in the motivation of the staff member and the manner in which he or she accepts and addresses the plan that has been cooperatively established. When viewed as "growth," the teacher's educational activities are regarded as development; if viewed only as "required improvement," the teacher is more likely to consider recommendations as unilateral prescriptions to overcome assumed shortcomings (Byrne, 1983).

Professional development and continuous school improvement are complex and idiosyncratic processes. Although expected patterns can be described and promising conditions can be fostered, each learning design must be tailored to individuals, schools, and districts. The design must be allowed and expected to evolve over time. Providing thoughtfully constructed staff development experiences for teachers and administrators will improve performance and professionalism for adults and expand learning opportunities for students (Levine & Broude, 1989).

The applicability of the course content to the schools varied somewhat from elementary to high schools. The staff at high schools were still requiring more time to get buy-in from their staff in support of SBSD, whereas the elementary participants found it easier and noticed early buy-in and direct applicability of LPD course activities and content to their staffs' situations and needs. In some cases, the course techniques, activities and content was being utilized by participants directly in their classrooms with their students.

Seven of ten respondents who were elementary teachers and administrators specifically indicated that they were pleased that the system was returning to an efficient method of delivery of staff development. In revisiting the past, as the system had school-based staff development (SBSD) a decade prior to and through the development of the strategic plan, the system is making a concerted effort to effectively and efficiently

implement SBSD. The participants who had worked for the system for at least ten years in the elementary schools expressed their pleasure in returning to SBSD.

Student Response to Innovation

With the use of the probe questions, it was possible to gain additional insight into participants' views of the program. One probe question requested information regarding students' response to changes occurring in the school. Seven of the respondents perceived their students were receiving benefits from the implementation of the SBSD program in areas such as learning outcomes, well managed classrooms and quality of instruction even though the students were oblivious to the efforts. Administrators indicated they saw good things happening in their teachers' classrooms with many activities directly related to the SBSD activities in which the staff were involved. Teacher participants noted as well that their students were improving in their math skills, writing skills and general learning outcomes. This was also a direct spin off of the teachers being involved in PD activities of specific skills and techniques directly related to the improvement required in the students. The result was improved student performance, supporting that the benefits would ultimately be student oriented.

Respondents from two schools did indicate there was not any impact on their students yet, but expected that there would be at a later date. This, in most part, was due to the fact that SBSD implementation at their school was still at an early stage of planning.

Elementary staffs are generalists and they feel it is easier to build continuity and consensus on a staff due to the overlap of each division. High schools, on the other hand, are specialists and are not as interested in SBSD. They would rather see efforts to improve their teaching skills for their own programs or specializations than efforts of a general or whole school nature. Schools which are still in the early stages of planning and implementation are not at the point of noticing any benefits to the students.

Benefits of the Program

The use of another probe question revealed additional strengths of the program. The benefits identified were to the participants, to the school and also to the system.

There appeared to be a great deal of benefit to the participants in that they attended the course and received an abundance of valuable information, resources and knowledge which directly apply to working with their staffs and students. Personal satisfaction, professional growth and having their own needs met are the key benefits mentioned by the participants. The opportunity to take the LPD course and be a part of the leadership team at their school increased the enthusiasm of the decision making committee on their staff.

These perceived benefits are consistent with the literature which supports ownership and empowerment at the school level developing efficient SBSD programs. As stated by Wood, the central office no longer is totally responsible for deciding the who, what, how, and when of change. Decisions about which specific improvements are to be implemented in schools should be made by faculty members in each school. The central office management team facilitates rather than directs this decision. Top district administrators identify procedures as well as provide and manage resources that enable principals and their teachers to implement improvement plans (1989).

The perceived benefits to the system that were identified by six of the respondents were, first, an increase in local expertise available throughout the system, which would ultimately improve the quality of education imparted to the students; and secondly, the perceived cost benefits of decentralizing the responsibility of PD to the schools without the financial resources to accompany the responsibilities. This benefit, however, is not necessarily a benefit to the staff or the schools, and is mentioned as a concern of system support in the section referring to the weaknesses of the program. The literature of Levine and Broude supports these perceptions that improvements are not sustained without specific system-wide commitments, support structures, and consistent monitoring (1989). Too often the very best teachers, who earn the most positive evaluations, are allowed to

limit their influence to the children fortunate enough to be enrolled in their classes (Byrne, 1983).

Perceived Weaknesses of the LPD Course

Although the perceived weaknesses of the LPD program were fewer than the perceived strengths, four participants did identify isolated concerns which were not consistent with the other respondents. This in itself indicated that the needs and concerns differ among the schools involved, as well as eight of the respondents indicated that one of the most important weaknesses of the program was that the needs that exist are abundant and differ greatly among the schools and staffs. The school structure, school culture, staff make-up, location, environments and morale all differ and all contribute to the respondents' perceived needs and concerns.

Other weaknesses which were apparently of greater concern to eight respondents were in the areas of the flexibility of the PD times available and the financial support offered by the system. Consistency with the literature was again apparent in the perceived weaknesses. Pawluk's research recommends: "The school system should limit the amount of change it wants to make at any one time. When the school system implements a new program, the teachers' concerns should be cared for before another program is initiated which places new demands on the teachers" (1988). He further recommends: "Opportunities must be provided for participants to get together to review the concepts and materials presented in the professional development activities, especially when a new program is being implemented. These follow-up activities can be used to solve problems or to discuss concerns encountered during implementation" (1988).

The perception of eight respondents was that the decentralization of the program and related responsibilities to the schools was occurring without decentralizing any budget to support the innovation. This has created a greater burden on the schools and has required creative problem solving at its best. An in-service program of this dimension will

succeed only if there is specific task orientation and positive leadership at the district level. Everyone, including the board of education, must appreciate, and concur, in the need for staff training and development and take the action necessary for effective implementation (Byrne, 1983). Improvements are not sustained without specific system-wide commitments, support structures, and consistent monitoring (Levine & Broude, 1989).

Five respondents were pleased the system recognized a need and converted one of the two fixed PD days to a "flex day" which could be taken any day during the year which was chosen by the staff of that school. This would enable the staff to access resource people that could otherwise be booked by other schools requiring the same sessions or workshops, and set the day up when they felt it fit and could be best utilized in their ongoing SBSD plan. The concern, however, was that this was still a "day" of PD and was not consistent with the literature or philosophy of effective SBSD. Successful staff development is context-sensitive. That is, efforts to change teacher behaviors should be directed to the context in which teachers do their work. The context can be a source of information about what might be addressed, about the best ways of moving ahead, about potential problems, and so forth. If staff development ignores context, as is the case in many one-shot workshops or brief visits by "experts", it probably will not be as successful as staff development that is deeply connected to schools and classrooms of participants (Griffin, 1987).

Perceived Factors of an Effective SBSD Program

Factors of an Effective School-Based Staff Development Program

Several factors were identified in the data which the respondents consistently indicated were significant with regard to an effective SBSD Program. The ongoing nature of effective staff development was perceived to be critical to all of the respondents including items such as flexibility of PD dates and times which would enable the staff to plan and implement portions of their plan when it would fit best into their schedule of

planned events. Making the SBSD program at each participating school as well as the leadership course long term would also improve the effectiveness by offering increased time to implement and accomplish the desired objectives of each SBSD program..

The resources were identified by all ten respondents as another key factor in areas such as the availability of experts within the schools and the school system. This program encourages staff to pursue PD activities that encourage and develop professional growth. Some of these resources are the networks that were created and required as well as the sharing that occurred as a result, and finally the financial resources in the form of support from the system and administrators. Pawluk's research recommends: "Opportunities must be provided for participants to get together to review the concepts and materials presented in the professional development activities, especially when a new program is being implemented. These follow-up activities can be used to solve problems or to discuss concerns encountered during implementation" (1988). Another factor is was the support and buy-in from staff and parents.

Restrictions Affecting the Progress of the SBSD Program

The balance of the probe questions supported the data which had already been collected regarding restrictions of an effective SBSD Program. There were some key issues that emerged. First, all ten respondents identified a lack of support from the system and the administration. Second, some external restrictions are changes in curriculum and availability of resources. Finally, seven respondents indicated that within internal restrictions exist staff ownership, consensus, staff stability, time management, and general resistance to change.

Reasons to Terminate the Program

The reasons for a participant to drop out of the course or program revealed concerns that were consistent with the respondents who disclosed the same reasons without the

probe question resulting in all ten respondents agreeing. The broad categories were, first, a lack of support from the system from administrators and from staff and second, some participant concerns about acceptance of change, specialization, multi-visions or overload, and saturation level. All of these were supported in the findings in previous sections of the results under weaknesses, factors of effective SBSD programs, and restrictions affecting the progress of the SBSD program.

Participants' Involvement as Viewed by Staff Members

This probe question revealed several additional factors which are clearly distinguishable between administrators and teachers. All five of the administrators perceived that others viewed them as enthusiastic facilitators who were always available for their staff when needed, and did not force the issues or responsibilities upon the staff. They believed they allowed teachers to work at their own pace without interference.

All four of the teachers, however, perceived that they themselves were viewed as interested staff members who are always the ones to be involved and also the ones who are expected to be involved. It appeared that teachers who had been involved in PD for several years had set a precedent and their colleauges expected them to continue, especially if the colleagues were too busy themselves. One participant expressed the concern that some staff members were possibly disappointed that they were not given the chance to volunteer for the position of participant in the LPD course.

Attitudes and Beliefs Towards the LPD Course

The balance of the research questions were used to solicit additional responses when it appeared that the respondents were hesitant or had difficulty identifying strengths, weaknesses, benefits and perceived factors of an effective SBSD Program. As probe questions, these were not presented to all participants for previously mentioned reasons. However, they did disclose consistent perceptions as well as additional responses.

Attitudes and beliefs fell into specific categories pertaining to the course and its implementation. The result was that all respondents indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the content, presenter and strategies in an ongoing process of learning, with some anxiety to get finished with the course and get things implemented at their own schools.

Participants' Reasons for Getting Involved

In addition to the responses to how their involvement was viewed by others, the four teacher participants consistently identified the reasons for involvement as meeting personal and professional improvement goals, being asked or being expected to be involved while the five administrators indicated it was their responsibility to be involved in the PD at their school.

Are Needs Being Met?

The entire group of respondents indicated their needs were being met to some extent along a continuum which ranged from some of their needs being met, to their needs are being met. Administrators indicated the development of leadership candidates and creative solutions as additional needs being met.

Drive to be a Lead Teacher

The responses to this probe question were again consistent with the strengths of the program and the factors of an effective SBSD Program. The factors which drive these participants to be lead teachers is their desire to be the best teachers possible, continuously improving their skills, and sharing their skills and knowledge with others to improve the quality of education imparted to their students.

Progress to Date

The extent of implementation within the SBSD program varies between schools represented by the respondents in this research. This variance ranges from one school PD committee just having chosen a topic to other schools with several initiatives or thrusts. It is clearly indicated in the findings that the elementary schools have made more progress in the SBSD program than the high schools. This appears to stem from the fact that elementary staffs have always seen the benefits of SBSD and are welcoming this model back into the system. They have never allowed SBSD to disappear from their actual PD plans. They have maintained a professional attitude by continuing to meet before school, at lunch and at staff meetings just to feel confident they are doing the best they can do in their classrooms as professionals. Long range plans have been developed by the elementary staffs which also reflect their advanced involvement in the SBSD program.

Conclusion

The LPD course had presented the participants with a challenging innovation, to promote and implement a SBSD program at their school, armed with an attitude of professional growth, a desire to improve the existing PD situation, and the information gathered from their involvement in the course workshops over a two year period. Based on the findings of this study, it appears that the respondents were satisfied with the results they achieved in the two years of involvement.

The strengths of the LPD course as identified by the respondents were numerous, and they believed these strengths to also be factors of an effective SBSD program. The weaknesses were few, however, the respondents indicated that these were equally as significant. As without the support and flexibility, and with the varying needs, it would appear that this innovation would not survive the test of time in an educational system which is constantly changing.

Recommendations

The results of this study identify several recommendations which could be made to various stakeholder groups. First as recommendations to the senior administration of Strathcona County:

1. Continue support for the implementation of the LPD Course be extended to all schools in the county without exception. Even though it is a voluntary program, each school would consist of some staff members who would be interested in pursuing the SBSD innovation. This may even be carried to a further degree of training all staff to complete at the very least Year 1, Phases 1 and 2 of the LPD Course.

2. Establish and/or maintain a central system or position which would monitor the progress within the schools involved in SBSD and provide a network hub which would allow participants in the LPD Program an opportunity to share successes, failures and ideas regarding their own SBSD program.

3. Establish and/or maintain a long term System PD plan which all schools would be make aware of, with a commitment to financial resources for both the LPD course as well as for other SBSD initiatives which schools may require. The concern in the findings was the decentralization of responsibility without decentralization of funding.

An additional recommendations directed towards the A.T.A. regarding implementation and involvement in the LPD Course: restrict the enrollment in year 2 to participants who have completed year 1 of the LPD Course.

Finally, a recommendation to the participants of the LPD Course, whether they be currently involved or have completed the course: since several participants indicated other staff members on their staffs were not aware of the LPD Course and its outcomes, it is recommended that the participants embark on a publicity campaign within their school. This may be accomplished through information being disseminated through staff meeting agendas, school bulletins, staff-room displays, and discussions about the SBSD program at the school.

Possibilities for Further Research

The findings have identified that SBSD will succeed if it is ongoing. This is supported and is regularly monitored and maintained. The monitoring of an innovation of this magnitude requires ongoing evaluation of not only the participants of the LPD Course, but also of the staff in each of the participating school and the support staff from the A.T.A. as well as central office.

Conducting focused interviews or using questionnaires to investigate the actual versus the perceived benefits to the school staff and the students. This would offer empirical data on the value of implementation of the SBSD Program.

A follow-up investigation of those schools and participants who had completed the LPD Course and are implementing SBSD at their schools. Conduct a descriptive study of their situations and how they are dealing with the information they received and how they are responding to the challenges of maintaining their SBSD Program.

Conduct a comparison study of participants who had entered the LPD course in year 2, and had not completed year 1 with participants who had completed both years of the course. This may reveal valuable data pertaining to the value of each year of the course.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO SUPERINDENDENT

December, 1992

Mr. Gordon Welch
Superintendent of Schools
Strathcona County
2001 Sherwood Drive
Sherwood Park, AB

Dear Mr. Welch,

Further to the approval of my sabbatical leave for study of the Leadership in Professional Development Course, I have received approval from the ethics review committee at the University of Alberta. Please find enclosed a copy of the documents which were submitted to the committee.

I am requesting your permission to contact the participants of the Leadership in Professional Development Course who are in Year 2 (Phases 3 & 4) of the program, to allow commencement of interviews in early January, 1993.

I have enclosed a copy of the interview questions which have been approved by my supervisor, Dr. D. Young and would also appreciate your input on changes which you feel appropriate.

Sincerely,

Terrance Pysyk
15804-79 Street
Edmonton, AB
T5Z 2V4
PH: 475-1168

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANTS' LETTER OF REQUEST AND CONSENT

Dear Participant,

With the permission of G. Welch, our superintendent of schools, I am doing a research study on the Leadership in Professional Development Program (LPDP) in Strathcona County. This study is part of the requirements needed for a Masters of Education degree. I am asking for your cooperation with an interview.

The purpose of this study is to identify participants' perceptions of the LPD Program, including the LPD Course, the strengths and weaknesses of the course and program as it relates to perceived student benefits, and what factors are perceived to maintain an effective school-based staff development program in our system.

The interview is the primary source of data collection for this study. I am requesting that all Year 2 (Phases 3 & 4) participants who have completed Year 1 (phases 1 & 2) be involved in this study. Participation in the study is completely voluntary. It may be necessary to use respondents' quotations in the research findings, therefore every effort has been made to guarantee anonymity of the participants, as neither names nor schools will be identified in the findings of the study. Each respondent has the right to opt out of the study at any time.

The interview will require approximately 45 minutes of your time at our mutual convenience. The interviews will be tape recorded upon your approval of using the recording device. The tapes will be erased upon your validating the accuracy of the scripts.

I will be contacting you regarding involvement in this study. I would like to thank you for taking the time to consider involvement in this study. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please call me at 475-1168.

Sincerely,

Terrance Pysyk

.....

CONSENT FORM

I have read and agree to the above conditions for involvement in this study. I give the researcher consent to tape record the interview. I give consent to the researcher to use quotes void of names and schools. I understand as a volunteer I may opt out at any time during the study or interview.

Participant:_____Signature:_____Date:_____

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE: RESPONDENTS

Introduction:

The purpose of this study is to identify participants' perceptions of the Leadership in Professional Development (LPD) Course the strengths and weaknesses of the course and the School-Based Staff Development (SBSD)program as it relates to perceived student benefits, and what factors are perceived to maintain an effective school-based staff development program.

Questions as they relate to:

Sub Problem 1)

1). What do you perceive to be the strengths and weaknesses of the LPD Course?

- Probe: What restrictions affect the progress of the LPD course?
- Probe: Are your in-service/professional development needs being met?
- Probe:What positive comments/complaints do you have about the LPD Course?
- Probe: How are students responding to the changes in your school?
- Probe: What changes are notable in students?
- Probe: What do you perceive to be the benefits to you, your school, your system and the students?

Sub Problem 2)

2). What do you perceive to be the factors of an effective SBSD program?

- Probe: Why would a school or participant drop out of the course or program?

Both

3) What are your attitudes and beliefs towards the LPD Course?

- Probe: What are your reasons for getting involved/volunteering for this position?
- Probe: What are your views on: meeting of objectives; time-lines allowed; presentation of course; presenter; content; scheduling of workshops; cost/benefits; adult learner concerns; change process?
- Probe: How is your involvement viewed by other teachers in your school?
- Probe: What drives you to be a lead teacher in your school?
- Probe: What is your purpose for being involved in this program?
- Probe:Based on Souster's (1992) study, at what level of use do you believe your school is at?

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW RESPONSES

Perceived Strengths of the LPD Course and/or SBSD program

administrator: I think the program is important. Its strength is, in my mind, drawing on the strengths within a staff, capturing every moment that is possible to share ideas, and to in-service people on the different areas of need. I personally do not see any weakness with the program. My perceptions are from an elementary teacher and I feel quite comfortable with school-based staff development. I think most elementary teachers would feel that way because that is the way we have operated since I have been involved in education, and that is 20 years. I do not see it as a new approach. I see it as coming back to what we always felt was an efficient delivery of staff development which was at the school level on an ongoing basis.

teacher: I see this program as being something that is directed at making the school function better for the students. Professional Development (PD) ultimately should help students in the end. The interest level or the subject area of the teacher causes a drive to be perfect or to be better at what they are doing.

administrator: The biggest strength is that you can tailor it to the needs of your staff. The previous model of smorgasbord style PD without the opportunity to come back and share or talk about what was of value to themselves or might be of value to peers was not very effective. Now there is more ownership and with what we know about adult learning, the more ownership they have, the more they feel it is self controlled and meeting their individual needs. The chance of the staff seeing the value in that results in an increase in pursuing SBSD. I am really happy that the system is implementing a flexible day next year, but I would like it to be more flexible.

teacher: The strength of the program is that it is helping teachers develop and implement a PD program within the school and allowing them to develop their program to meet the needs of the teachers and the students within the school. Another strength is that it is school specific. The teachers know what their needs are, and by meeting the needs of the teachers, we are also meeting the needs of the students. By having the teachers and the PD committee within each school do the planning and the implementation, we are meeting the needs of these teachers at the grass roots level. A lot of the other planning that went on prior to the SBSD program did not necessarily meet the actual needs of the teachers within any given school. The needs vary a great deal from school to school, and from teacher to teacher, and those needs are now being met.

administrator: One of the strengths of the program is that it has given added impetus to PD. It has certainly sparked my enthusiasm as well as that of my teacher representative colleague. It has given us some ideas on various group processes that can be used to generated topics, to create staff consensus, and to reduce staff negativity. I think it has given some

direction to what staff development (SD) should be like in the County of Strathcona. Research indicates that the best SD programs are those that serve teacher needs and are teacher-directed, and decentralization of PD responsibilities, from my point of view, is going to have benefits for students.

teacher: I see the strength as giving us a focus and a purpose in what it is that we are undertaking in professional development. Compared to the last couple of years we feel that we have a bit more control in what we are undertaking, and that there is a definite progression being made. Now we are taking a two or three year look at something down the road, whereas before it was a reactive rather than a pro-active approach. So I think that we feel that it is more purposeful.

administrator: The strength of the program is that it specifically meets the professional development needs of this staff and this student body. It is very relevant to the individuals in our school. I think further to that when it is school-based it can be tailored to the learning styles and the individual learning needs of each person. This is a fairly small school and by knowing our student body we know what kinds of case studies would be relevant in terms of the professional activities we do, by asking a question like, "How can the regular teacher diversify their program to meet all of these kinds of needs?" We can take case studies of children in our school and design programs relevant to them. We can make it very practical to things like the individual program plans that the teachers are doing anyway. I think that strength is the whole area of relevancy and being able to be very specific in meeting the needs of this school and this staff.

administrator: I believe the course has good content. The opportunities to share with others was extremely important, especially their plans, successes and failures. It was also important to share with those in the same grade levels. There was too much to read, and probably very few participants read even half of what was supplied, but it is a good resource. The group activities involving schools at the same levels enabled setting up of networks. There appeared to be more buy-in as others had seen the results being discussed and clarified through group discussions.

Perceived Weaknesses of the LPD Course and/or SBSD Program

administrator: There could be more sharing time, especially in the area of how to implement the ideas and activities that worked at the other schools.

administrator: One of the weaknesses is the difficulty with a larger staff. There is a greater range of needs, and for them to come to a consensus of identifying a collective need versus individual needs is a difficult process Then identifying a direction, while still allowing opportunities for them to work on their individual plans. This takes time and is a difficult process.

teacher: Feedback was never given on any of the assignments we did and it did not really matter if we handed it in or not. I suppose it mattered on a personal and a school basis, but to hand in our plans to the instructor and never get them back, was very frustrating. I would have liked some kind of

feedback. No one ever looked at our plan and sat with us and offered advice. There was never any time devoted to our plan and our individual school needs, and I found that to be a drawback.

administrator: One thing I do not like about the program is that that new people who are entering the course at this late date really are not at the same level as the people who have been involved in the program for the full two years. If these people have not done levels one and two, they should not be allowed to do levels three and four representing their school. If just the principal or just the teacher is continuing in the course, you lose that collaboration , but I am finding that this causes restricted progress for the balance of the group. They are asking questions that where covered a year ago. Either the school should go back to level one if they have new people, or they have to separate.

administrator: The more flexibility we get and the more we get people in the schools in the know about change and about PD in adult learners, and that is what we've been getting through this course, then the better our chances are of having PD in the schools that will be more effective. How effective is still by degree. The more flexibility we get, the more our individual staff needs are shared, and the more peer coaching you can allow for. That is a budget constraint, however, because you have to provide the time. It is also a threat to some individuals in that they are not comfortable about giving it a try. So over time you have got to be able to take it away from the evaluation process and get staff to discuss amongst themselves improvements in teaching and learning.

administrator: The secondary principals did not want to get involved in this whole PD thing period. I am not sure that this model of PD would be something that they would strive toward or endorse, yet I have the feeling from the upper level administration that they would not be receptive to our having 28 different models in our 28 schools. We have to come up with some kind of PD plan that is system wide, whether it be two days a year or four half days a year or an hour ten times per year. I think it is a possibility but I think we would have some selling to do. Another weakness I am finding is now that we have gone to staff development (SD) being full days, we are still trying to do some of this drip kind of in-servicing a bit at a time. That used to happen as part of our staff meeting and now that staff meeting time is all after school. I am finding that PD is really suffering, so at our school we are now trying to do it after school.

administrator: Another difficulty with the program is this two days a year focus. You need more frequent smaller chunks of learning. The time frame of the SB program, as it is now in the system, is not very useful.

administrator: I think our staff is at a point where they are feeling positive about the whole idea of SD. They are seeing the benefits. They are seeing that SD cannot be a one shot event. SD is not occurring on two days of the year. They feel like I do and it still boggles my mind how we could be doing this course and finding out all the research on how adults learn, and yet our board is not committed enough to this concept that they are prepared to give us four or five afternoons, or four separate sessions. It still makes no sense to have two days. It goes against anything the instructor said up to this point, and yet we do this. I guess the big wheels turn slowly.

supervisor: Being an optimist, I would say I think it is underfunded but, I suppose that is unfair when you consider the salary they are paying me, and the sub release time. I guess I would like to see it all linked with some peer coaching money and have a few more specifics linked to the school PD plans but that is budget and that will have to be done by individual schools. That, I suppose, is the weakness. The only negative that I see is, because we do not have all the funding that would be available in an ideal world, the lack of actual release time for peer coaching and the lack of training of several strong teachers in every school, every department head, and every coordinator to be a peer coach extraordinarre, to be collaboratively trained to work in a collaborative way.

administrator: The other concern is financial. To what extent would PD at the school level be supported financially by central office? If there is any centralized PD budget, under what terms will it be divided so that smaller schools like this school here do not suffer? We are not handicapped in any way, but it is a concern about equity. Another concern, perhaps depending on the topic we choose, is to what extent can we have guest speakers, and whether we could afford the honoraria and so on. Another one would be time. If March 1 is a school-based PD day, are we going to wait until another March, a year later before we are given time to consider important issues? The course emphasized that effective SD programs occur when the time is right, when teachers are fresh. It should be held when teachers are feeling refreshed. Are we going to be allowed to schedule these when they can have the greatest impact for the teachers?

administrator: I think the benefit of SB is that central office no longer has to do the work. The school does all the work. It is yet another thing that has been decentralized to the schools without any resources. We received the program but did not get any dollars to use with the program. We did not get any time, but we have got the responsibility. I see it as yet another responsibility placed on schools, and it has eliminated the system from having to take responsibility for it. I don't think we are to the point where we have a complete SB program yet. We used to have it and we may have it again. Right now it is shared so the system finds out directions we want to head and they offer programs or sessions in those areas. It costs the system less. You would think if it is central-office initiated, there would be some expectation that maybe there will be some release time or some resources provided. When it is school based it seems that expectation disappears. We would have to do it within our existing budget.

Student Response to Innovation

administrator: Some needs may be more directly related to the teachers' understanding of curriculum shifts and program continuity, and that influences student learning outcomes.

administrator: The whole system benefits because you develop greater expertise levels throughout the schools which the system could also utilize in planning system events in areas such as collaborative planning, in peer

coaching and in schools helping schools. Schools helping schools helping teachers helping teachers ultimately helps kids help kids.

administrator: I believe that we have identified, through our staff, a number of areas that they would like to be in-serviced on, whether they are topics or approaches, teaching practices, cooperative learning, pro-social skills, or behavioral management. From what I have seen and observed, as more and more teachers become more and more comfortable with those topics and become more practiced at them, I see good things happening in the classrooms. I see classrooms that are well managed, and that are becoming, or are, quite efficient in the time being spent on the teaching of concepts. I guess without having any sort of empirical data, I would say the kids are benefitting by having more on-task time. They are having teachers that are using practices that maximize effort.

teacher: Apparently we picked this topic as a result of some of the poor performance by some of our students on the last set of Diploma exams.

administrator: I think the biggest thing has to do with how effective and how stressed the students are.

teacher: They are developing a lot of social skills and cooperative learning (CL) kinds of skills. That has come out of my being more professionally developed, and knowing how to do it. The same with using all the math manipulatives. Having her (the principal) here who also teaches, you can still come here and ask for her assistance or approval any time. There are a lot of positive spin-offs with what is happening because again, I can look at the needs of my students and now I can identify the needs and work towards meeting them. We have identified Lion's Quest (LQ). I am quite excited about it because we are not looking at our needs here. It might be interesting to take a course on something, but we are actually looking at the needs of our students and gearing our PD activities to help us meet those needs. We have the capabilities to do that now, whereas before when we did not have that input and it was much more global as PD. You could not tailor it as much as you can now.

administrator: If you have teachers focusing on improving instruction, certainly the system as a whole is going to benefit. The quality of instruction imparted to students would certainly improve. Perhaps the exam results and the achievement level of students would also increase.

teacher: I think the students are getting a stronger program because the entire staff is being in-serviced on certain things and it has allowed us to have some continuity between grades and between programs within the school. I think they are receiving some continuity between what they study, as well as between teachers and between grades.

administrator: I think the students are oblivious to it. Maybe the teachers heightened their teaching skills but the children would not be aware that that was a result of the SD. I think it has had some payoffs for the students with the kinds of learning activities they have, but I do not think they are consciously aware of it. I think my teachers are stronger at teaching process writing. I think they are better at analyzing their childrens' writing in terms of diagnosis and where to steer those kids. So the kids are getting more

individualization in terms of the direction their writing is to take. They are getting a stronger process writing program. I do not think it is anything that they are aware of, although it has a very positive impact on the the teaching skills of the teachers in this school and that is the program they are able to deliver. It certainly has payoffs for the kids.

teacher: I would say we are not at a point in our SBSD program right now where we can see changes in our students.

teacher: So far I would say we are not at a point in our school where we would be able to notice students responding to changes or that changes are notable in students.

administrator: No we are not at that point yet because the program really has not taken off. Our first in-school SD is projected to take place on March 10, and we have a whole day of events planned. We have not done anything yet, except choose a topic.

Benefits of the LPD Course and SBSD Program

1. Benefits to the participants

administrator: My only concern is, personally, that it has been more of a personal evaluation in how effective have I been at implementing what I have learned from the course to my school.

teacher: For me personally, the opportunity of taking the course has been a real learning experience because I have learned a lot about working with adults and about how we learn and how I learn. Taking the course and being part of the committee has certainly tied me into becoming involved in PD. For me personally, it has been a lot of personal satisfaction and a feeling of accomplishment. I think we as a school have certainly improved. We have developed goals together as a school, and we have looked at our needs together as a school staff, and we are going in one direction together. We are working together a lot more as a team. This gave me, personally, some good ideas about where those people (adult learners/staff members) are coming from, how their thought processes work, and how to approach them and try to promote change within them. I found that very difficult about PD.

teacher: The course provides ideas that, can not only be applied to staff, but can also be used in the classroom with students.

administrator: One of the strengths of the program is that it has given added impetus to PD. It has certainly sparked my enthusiasm as well as that of my teacher representative colleague. It has given us some ideas on various group processes that can be used to generated topics, to create staff consensus, and to reduce staff negativity. I think it has given some direction to what staff development (SD) should be in the County of Strathcona. Research indicates that the best SD programs are those that serve teacher needs and are teacher directed, and decentralization of PD responsibilities, from my point of view, is going to have benefits for

students. I have always been interested in PD and this has really vitalized my enthusiasm, and made me an active participant in planning what would hopefully be a meaningful program for the benefit of our teachers and students. It has brought me up to date on research in PD and the kinds of things that can be done to enhance the quality of SD programs. It has made me aware of the need to be learners on a continuing basis. Learning does not stop, and one can always pick up ideas. It has helped me become familiar with some cooperative education techniques and related group processes.

teacher: Personally I am more involved because of taking the course as well as being involved in the program. I have a more vested interest in it. There is certainly some extra work involved and yet it is not of an uncontrollable nature. It does not take up too much time. It also gives you a clearer understanding of the needs of other teachers, not just thinking of yourself. You can see what the concerns are of other people. It gives you the experience of organizing things for larger groups of people. I guess it is a selfish reason. I have taught so many years that I like to try new things just to keep my interest up so that I do not get in a rut. Secondly, I like the idea of finding out what others are doing in other schools. I think you learn a great deal from that. I think it increases the opportunity to work with and know the staff better. When some new idea comes out it is always much easier to learn it at its grass roots than it is to have somebody else tell you about it or teach about it indirectly. If it makes your teaching run more smoothly or makes the job more satisfying, then go for it.

teacher: There is a benefit for me in that I have a greater say in what it is that I am undertaking in PD. I looked upon it as an opportunity to develop professionally. Perhaps something that would look good on my resume.

administrator: Benefits to me personally are first, some self-satisfaction, that I am able to help address some of the PD needs that my staff have identified either individually or collectively. Staff development is a very important consideration in terms of my own philosophy so I get a lot of satisfaction from the SB program where I am able to help my staff meet their needs. Second, in terms of self, now that administrators are in a role of having to evaluate teachers, which I do not find is one of my favorite roles, I would rather be a coach than an evaluator. However, I am an evaluator and within my evaluations I observe trends in my school, either overall strengths or overall weaknesses in the teaching that my teachers are doing. I think, by being on the SBSD committee, I can add some parts to the PD that address strengths or weaknesses that I see in their teaching. For example, maybe an overall trend that I see is that they are doing a really good job of basic teaching, but they do not know how to provide enrichment or how to challenge the very gifted children. Maybe within something we are doing in SD, some opportunities can be provided that will give them some skills. In terms of their overall evaluation they will be able to improve in those areas. Or maybe it is something like I notice an overall need in the area of planning. Maybe planning is a weakness, maybe it is unit planning, maybe it is daily planning. So within the kind of PD activities we offer I can manipulate things a little bit so that the kinds of planning that are needed are addressed and then I might see some transfer to what they are doing in their classrooms, and thus their evaluations may be improved. So that part of it is in my role as an evaluator, I am able to

address their needs. A third benefit is I tend to be a fairly controlling personality and when it is SB I have a lot more control than when the system says, 'Thou shalt attend this session and you will all be happy!' I feel a little more in control of my own fate and the fate of my staff members. I see myself as kind of a mother to them or a role model, someone for them to work with, and I think I can protect them a little bit, encourage them a little bit, individualize a little bit when it is SB rather than when it is system-based. So those are some of the benefits to me. I think the instructor has given me some good things to use in terms of the PD program in our school, and also at my staff meetings and group meetings. I have developed some new strategies. I therefore believe it has strengthened me as an administrator, and it probably has strengthened my teacher representative in terms of working with staff as well as students in the classroom.

2. Benefits to the school staff

administrator: What I am finding is teachers getting more benefit out of the whole ideas of SD, taking ownership of the problem or areas they want to improve in, areas where they are not satisfied, and they are feeling comfortable saying yes, I would be really interested in improving my situation.

administrator: I think it is going well. Teachers are feeling more and more comfortable with changing jargon, methodologies, and strategies, and we also work with our staff through many in-services to provide staff with an understanding of where things are. Then they experiment in their rooms. One benefit of the leadership program from an administrative perspective is it really emphasizes the ability to develop lead teachers. It places the administration in a facilitator role rather than a direct service role. You are able to draw teachers into a leadership position, having a division one, grades one, two, three representative attend those meetings, a grade four, five, six representative attend those meetings. You emphasize lead teachers, and lead teachers share and work with staff. I think what it does is enhance collegiality. It reduces their barriers, or perceived barriers to change. Administrators can not "do it all". We never could. Smoke and mirrors and illusions are not the way to function. It is a benefit to collectively share the leadership roles in various facets of the PD plan. We have some staff who are very enthused and interested in student record portfolios, some who are very much into special needs student-integration, some who think program continuity ties everything together. That is great. We have developed our expertise on staff. The staff development program recognizes that an expert is not a hundred miles away. You can count your expertise within your school. It allows every staff member to be recognized for the things that he really has a great interest in, and he shares that expertise with the staff. Our staff meetings, as a result of this, include a PD component. This month, for example, we are having a language learning in-service. We are also having a student record portfolio in-service. This is coming from staff identified needs from our staff development plan that came out of the surveys and the material that came out of the LPD plan. In our curriculum tote boxes every teacher received selected copies of certain information from the PD plan. At our staff meeting each month, including this month, we got a report from the staff development committee. So we are always focusing on realizing that learning is growing, and that lets us reduce the inhibitions to attempt things. I think there is a lot of strength from an administrative perspective,

because the administrators recognize that leadership is everyone on staff. I think it places the ownership on each one of us to make things current, to take some ownership rather than having things imposed from above. It also creates a tremendous growth mode, and in our case it has led to over half of our professional staff going back to school and pursuing graduate work. And I think that is a really strong factor. I think it helps spur professional growth in the school setting, and also in attitude, and that is exciting. We are developing lead teachers in the areas that are of interest to the staff. We have creative solutions put into effect such as the Drip Method.

administrator: I think the teachers are feeling that they are finally getting more results. We conducted a vote where they spent a quarter, so they could weight their priorities individually, and then as a group. We shared that information and we are trying to narrow and focus on what they want for the March day and we will do our own SB here.

teacher: We are identifying all these needs that before, perhaps, we did not. Everybody picked something that was of interest or they saw as a personal need. Now we are really looking at our needs, and our needs are great. One of the very positive things of the program is that it certainly made people more aware of their need for PD. It has certainly allowed them to take more ownership, and I think people are becoming a lot more involved in PD, not just on PD days, but generally, because their needs are now real, because they have had input into identifying them. They have some support and then they say okay, but I need more support, so what can I do for me? I think generally speaking, it has certainly increased the amount of PD among the teachers in general. We have developed goals together as a school and we have looked at our needs together as a school, and are going in one direction together. We are working together a lot more as a team. We are looking at the needs of the school in general and identifying common threads and we are working together as a team. My PD is not just me, but I am also working with other staff members because I know we are meeting the same needs together. Teachers have a lot more input into what areas they are going to be more proficient at. There is a lot more buy in. Teachers are becoming a lot more actively involved in pursuing PD. We now have a plan in place. We have established goals at our school, and a lot of that came through the community school. We have established our priorities for PD. We have staff giving a lot more input into what they really want in terms of needs. We have to keep working on that as we still have work to do in area of ownership.

administrator: It has helped to focus SD as an important tool for learning, and SD appears on the agenda of every staff meeting. Some reference is made to planning and the needs of staff. It has given us ownership and responsibility. You do not have SD done to you.

teacher: We feel that we have a little bit more control in what we are undertaking and that there is a definite progression being made at our school. We are taking a two or three year look at something down the road. I think that we feel that there it is a bit more purposeful. I think the students are getting a stronger program because the entire staff is being in-serviced on certain things and it has allowed us to have some continuity between grades and between programs within the school. I think they are receiving some continuity between what they study, as well as between teachers, and

between grades. For the school, there is a definite focus in what it is that we study. The program is providing a focus.

3. Benefits to the system

administrator: From a system perspective, I think as you have staffs critically receptive to new ideas, the system helps to assist to sponsor the expertise in the school. The whole system benefits because you then develop greater expertise levels across the schools which the system could also utilize in planning system events.

teacher: Within a system, whenever your teachers are more professionally developed, the needs of the students are being met. Professional development and the needs of the students are tied more closely. There is no doubt that the system is going to benefit and it is going to increase the quality of education system wide.

administrator: If you have teachers focusing on improving instruction, certainly the system as a whole is going to benefit. The quality of instruction imparted to students would certainly improve. Perhaps exam results and the achievement levels of students would increase also. For the system itself it is helping to decentralize some programs. There might be some cost benefits for the system.

teacher: If the teachers' needs are being met then certainly that is a plus for the system. I would certainly imagine that there is less work at the county office level in setting up professional development activities because a majority is being done at the schools. Some of the work is being handed to the teachers. It puts more work on the teachers' shoulders and yet that is what the teachers want because it is filling their needs.

administrator: A benefit to the system is probably the staff would feel that their needs are being better met at the school level and the system has to support that. They are meeting teachers' needs. It costs the system less. You would think if it is central-office initiated, there is some expectation that maybe there will be some release time or some resources provided. When it is school based it seems that expectation disappears. We do it within our existing budget.

Perceived Factors of an Effective SBSD Program

Factors of an Effective Program

administrator: Our teachers understand that PD is not effective as a one-time shot; therefore it must be broken down to segments, and must be ongoing.

administrator: At least the one thing that we found when we had the style of the two hours, was that you could divvy it up so you get into what Joyce Junting called the Drip Method of PD. People could only take in so much at a time, and they needed time to apply it and work with it and come back and be held responsible for discussions and follow-up of what they had learned.

They could then build on, review and reinforce it. From what we know about teaching, that makes a whole lot more sense than gorging and leaving, and saying, "thank God that's over."

administrator: I personally believe that we need to move into a greater partnership with parents and we need to give students more responsibility for educational goals. I think we are providing them with a very sound program, particularly science and math, for those who manage to survive through high school in that background, but that we have done little to offer them opportunities to set educational goals as lifelong learners.

administrator: It is good to have some time that is not part of our personal time but is part of our regular day to meet the SB program needs. However, I think there has to be follow-up. I do not think a one shot affair is very effective most of the time. I think the most effective SB programs are those that have a variety of things that take place over a long period of time.

Flexibility of Professional Development Times

administrator: In terms of the time structure I found the model of having the third Wednesday of every month for PD of school-based staff development much more useful than I am finding the two days a year.

administrator: I have been opposed to the March timing. I am really happy that we are going flexible next year, and I am waiting for that, but I still would like it to be more flexible. The more flexibility we get and the more we get the people in the schools in the know about change and about PD in adult learners, the better our chances are of having some kind of PD in the schools that will be more effective. How effective I think is still by degree. The more flexibility we get, the more your individual staff needs are shared and the more peer coaching you can allow for. The board could back out of the management of our schools and let the schools be more flexible and say yes, you have to have 188 days out of these 192.

administrator: They have seen the benefits of in-school in-servicing. It could be a group of teachers who do not see SD as happening twice a year. Instead, whenever the need arises is when I would like to know more about it. Hence, you have a staff that feels together enough that they are prepared, that they do not see SD as occurring strictly within a school day. Staff development can occur at lunch hour, and will occur at lunch hour and after school and means that the staff that feels the benefit of going to this in-service, but this in-service is on my time we will say, 'out of school time'. So I guess it is, for a lack of a better word, a professional attitude towards SD. I have a need, I need to be in-serviced on something and I am prepared to give up time outside of school time to be in-serviced on it. They are being convinced that SD for all the reasons that they disliked system-wide (PD). They are seeing that SD cannot be a one shot thing. Staff development is not occurring on two days of the year. They feel like I do and it still boggles my mind how we could be doing this course and getting all the research about how adults learn, and yet our board is not committed enough to this concept that they are prepared to give us four or five

afternoons, or four separate sessions. It still makes no sense to have two days. It goes against anything the instructor said up to this point, and yet we do this. I guess the big wheels turn slowly.

teacher: I personally feel it is moving too quickly and I do not think we can, at our school, move at the speed it is moving. It would certainly be feasible to spread the course sessions over a longer period of time.

administrator: It caters to the needs of the staff. It is practical, and there is a carry over to the classroom. It leads to a commitment to improvement and constant self-evaluation. It is over an extended period of time so that the idea towards continuous learning and improvement shapes the attitudes of the teacher or the participants.

administrator: I guess it is a preconceived notion, but in my own mind, leadership in staff development has to be a process, a slow process.

administrator: It is a process that cannot be rushed. It might be interesting, or it might be a good idea to take level 1 and then, give people a year off, only have the meetings. I eluded to having meetings after the course was done. Have level 1, but in the following year build in a couple or three meetings throughout the year, and a chance for the network to get together for feedback and sharing. Then at the end of the second year people would have a very clear idea of their areas of need.

The Change Process

administrator: Three years to get a staff comfortable with the process sounds good to me. That is really what I am looking at. When did we start? A year and a half ago, approximately. I would say in another year and a half, if we continue, that will be fine. I think they are not lying down. They are to the point where they are saying, we want school-based; we are not interested in system wide. We have a fixed day next year and a floating day. Great, let us make them both in school.

administrator: If change is to be really meaningful, it has to be a three to five year process of implementing. Teachers have to feel comfortable to experiment, to celebrate success and to celebrate failure as well.

Support - administrative

administrator: Factors in a school-based program would include such things as climate, emphasis on risk taking, and encouraging staff to be eclectic in their teaching methods, strategies and philosophies. There is an appreciation that good teachers use what works, and band wagons come and go but teachers are still in the classroom, and the bottom line is the kids and trying to encourage staff growth. Another factor is a sense of empowerment, because if we truly want kids to be empowered to be critical thinkers and productive students, then teachers also have to feel that they are empowered to be critical thinkers able to make change. There has got to be

a problem-solving attitude among staff. There has to be an egalitarian school approach. The administrative style has to be one that appreciates individual differences and at many times the administration leads by following.

supervisor: I think that it is absolutely essential that administration in each building be completely supportive in working with the PD committees at every level and every stage that they implement, all along the way.

administrator: Administration is supportive of SBSD, encouraging teachers, and supporting the ideas of creating local expertise in certain areas so you can draw on certain pockets of your staff to provide in-servicing to other teachers. An administration that believes in SD to the point where they are prepared to provide release time, may possibly build into their budget opportunities for peer coaching and peer collaboration and inter-school visitations.

administrator: If the administration does not support it, it becomes token. If it is not perceived by the staff as important to the administration then I think it would be very difficult for the staffs to place any sort of importance on it. I think the administration has a role to play in supporting it, not only in terms of time but also in terms of money. If it is important then even in tough budgetary times we can find ways to support teacher release time.

teacher: You need a leadership team. You need buy-in by teachers and staff. You need funding, time, resources and support from central office.

Support - Time and Money

administrator: It is probably time or money because the only place that money comes in is if you need the money to buy the time. I think we have a lot of materials and a lot of people we can call on without a lot of funds. Whether it is from the A.T.A., or our own school system, and even your own building, the resources are not being well-valued and shared because you cannot get the time. So focusing and directing it and having the time are your major needs.

administrator: I do not know what the total cost is to our system, but certainly I think it is the one element of support we are getting in terms of the SB program. We are not getting time and we are not getting any direct dollars. This course is the one benefit we are getting. They are at least giving us the sub time for our teachers and whatever it is costing for the course and the room. My teachers deserve the benefit for all the work that we are doing at the school level.

teacher: I feel that you need PD release time in order to do an effective job of it, not to just do a job, but to do an effective job.

administrator: You have to have excellent resources, whether it be video tapes or personnel or self-directed learning materials, in order to have an effective program. Another factor in an effective program is having some time that is not part of our personal time but is part of our regular day to

meet the SB program needs. I think there has to be follow-up. I do not think a one shot affair is very effective most of the time. I think the most effective SB programs are those that have a variety of things that take place over a long period of time. For example, you might have a three year plan in some areas, and other things like Project Wild may be just a one shot event, so it is important to have a variety that allows whatever you selected for your program to be carried through.

Support - Parental

administrator: I believe that we need to move into a greater partnership with parents and we need to give students more responsibility for educational goals. I think we are releasing them with a very sound background, particularly in science and math, for those who manage to survive through high school. But we have done little to offer them opportunities to set educational goals as a lifelong learners. We are setting them up for success in institutions to get papers, and to get jobs, but not in terms of a junior high or a high school kid getting an opportunity to identify a topic that he would like to learn and to have mentors and to set up his own schedule and determine the scope of his own learning.

administrator: You can show the parents all the research you want and you are not going to win them over. So the biggest thing for me would be to have a lot of parents involved in your educational thrusts as a school so that you get a balance, that you get some people rather than a few who are directing the advisory council capacity of your school, and depending on who those few are, they could be highly influential as the squeaky wheels and not share the general community beliefs in the system. That is always a worry because we do tend to have very small numbers because everybody is so darn busy.

Networks and sharing

administrator: I guess having some kind of network or an advisory capacity for your particular situations over time would be really nice. Maybe it is unrealistic, and maybe not, in terms of funding and who would do it and so on.

administrator: I think it would be valuable to share the change process with the whole staff, at least the bare minimum, something about the change process, something about Joyce and Showers PD collection of data and something about adult learning, about the difference between how kids and adults learn. We are planning for one another and sharing with one another. Give them more responsibility for their own professional development, and in general they want some of that. By giving it to the school we are allowing at least some people to have more control of PD and allowing the groups to tailor it.

administrator: Parental support is positive if it sets up some kind of networks that we continue to have long range plans between groups from

one school to another. Maybe that would be one of the biggest plusses coming out of it in the end.

administrator: I think it is an opportunity that I welcome to get together with people from other schools and talk about what they are doing in terms of their SB programs and share some notes and maybe build some bridges and get together on some collaborative kinds of projects. So I see it as a real opportunity for sharing.

administrator: I would like, at some point, to have an opportunity to get back with this network, maybe meet once or twice a year and do perception checks and have a rap session about what new happenings are going on in each of the other staffs, what are the successes, and what have been the failures? I think that to me is the next step. I think there is only so much you can give us. I think my suggestion would be to have an opportunity to get back together, but not often. Once or twice a year to have an opportunity to sit around the table and rap and talk about successes.

Professional Attitudes

administrator: There should be a professional attitude towards SD. I have a need, I need to be in-serviced on something and I am prepared to give up time outside of school time to be in-serviced on it.

administrator: It leads to a commitment to improvement and constant self evaluation. It is over an extended period of time so that it shapes the attitudes of the teacher or the participants. It is the idea towards continuous learning and improvement.

administrator: So often we have to stop and think what it is we are counting in schools, because that tells a lot about what we think is important.

teacher: As well as being directed by the teachers, there is certainly a commitment to the program once it gets initiated.

Ownership

teacher: If not total, a high percentage of staff involvement is important, but preferably total. It should be more teacher directed, not directed by the administration.

administrator: Staff are seeing a need for change and ownership, seeing that nothing is being imposed, and improved timing to actually reduce stress levels.

supervisor: It is essential that teachers need to determine their own directions and empower themselves.

teacher: There has to be staff input. It is really vital that the teachers have had input in it, for the teachers have time to identify their needs and to find

some common threads in their needs, and to have input into the planning. It is vital; it has to be there. It cannot be a committee making decisions for the staff. That is not a whole lot more effective than county office making decisions for the system. Those teachers have to have input, and real input, not, "we are a committee that represents you and this committee will make the decisions and this is what PD is going to be in this school." It can also not be an administrator making those decisions. It actually has to be teachers having real input into it, because without that there develops a lot of resentment. It is something that is put on them that they have to do, and out of that resentment you dissolve all the real benefits of it. So they have to feel that they are empowered.

administrator: One factor is that everybody has to have some input. I think it also has to be well planned and within that planning it has to meet the needs identified through the input given by the staff.

Focus

administrator: Focusing and directing it and having the time are your major needs. In terms of success, focus and an understanding what your prime goals are, what is shared and what is the priority.

Collaboration, for needs identification and implementation

supervisor: Grade groups or departments in schools need to go through having someone facilitate with them in a collaborative way, to determine what their own needs are. Therefore a needs assessment is essential but not a paper and pencil needs assessment that is written for somebody else. They need to determine their own directions and empower themselves.

administrator: One factor would be teachers who feel comfortable expressing or admitting that there is a need that they have and that they need in-servicing. A group of teachers who do not fear change because they have already experienced it, and true SBSD, staff will say that is how it happened. They have seen the benefits of in-school in-servicing. They are to the point where they are saying "we want school-based. We are not interested in system-wide."

Needs Differ

teacher: A lot of the other planning that went on before did not necessarily meet the actual needs of the teachers within any given school. The needs vary a great deal from school to school, and from teacher to teacher, and we are now meeting those needs.

administrator: We are using our SBPD money to address the needs of individuals. We have a school plan and then we have a small group or an individual plan as well.

teacher: When county office planned PD or even if you look at PD in the aspect of teachers' conventions, it met certain needs, but there are a lot of needs right at the school level that those kinds of sessions can not meet that these (SBSD sessions) can meet.

Collaborative results

administrator: You not only need somebody to work you through and see some examples, but you need somebody to make you feel that it is worth the stress to make the change for up to 40 times until it becomes part of your repertoire. We just have not got a system yet that is set up for following through like that, but we have more of a chance now. The more flexibility we get and the more we get the people in the schools in the know about change and about PD in adult learners, and that is sort of what we have been getting through this course, then the better our chances are of having some kind of PD in the schools that will be more effective. How effective is still by degree. The more flexibility we get, the more your individual staff needs are shared and the more peer coaching occurs.

administrator: Maybe we really want people who are thinkers and problem solvers and have some control and direction in a program, and have some individual mentor-ship kinds of relationships with teachers and value them as people instead of policemen up there who check what we do and give us a rating at the end.

Restrictions Affecting the Progress of the SBSD Program

Lack of Support from system

supervisor: I could see schools that feel that there is going to be more funding support coming from central office, getting discouraged if they begin to feel that there is no support funding for the initiatives that they have bothered to do a need assessment collaboratively on. If they feel that it is not going to come to fruition, they will not be able to get where they want to go because of time, release time, funds for honoraria of speakers and facilitators and whatnot. I think restrictions in funding have sort of prevented that from happening completely.

administrator: I have some concerns when we talk school-based staff development, those being, facilities, money, and resources. That is going to be a concern and I do not think that it will ever go away. That is a concern whether it is a concern for me at the school level, or at the central office level.

teacher: We are not too sure whether we are going to use local resources or whether the instructor is going to have ideas, and also what kind of costs might be incurred. I think finances is one big thing, and the other is time.

administration: The key restrictions are money and release time. There is a need for more than rhetoric, a need for more long range commitment from the system, a need for a greater resource base and, a need for cross training to allow expertise to develop throughout the schools and the system. There is a need for more time as well as money. Our teachers understand that PD is not effective as a one-time shot; therefore it must be broken down into segments, and must be ongoing with long range commitment, experimentation, trials, and revisions.

administrator: We have all these classified people that we need to provide PD for. If you are doing one thing that fits the certified staff you have to come up with something else then you do need support for doing that.

administrator: It is going to take a lot of time, and you can not do it in science and in math and in language learning (LL) and on continuity, and meanwhile we have more discipline and behavior problems. So your teachers are needing sessions with Jim Coombs on how to hold kids who are kicking and screaming and biting and punching. That is a necessity. You have got to do it now, and you have to practice it. You just can not see it once and remember it.

teacher: Time is always a restriction. This year particularly, elementary schools have found that time to meet has been very restrictive. Time to meet with our staff to develop goals and to develop our needs has been very restrictive because we have so many issues that we normally dealt with at staff meeting that we could not do this year. We meet most noon hours, and we meet all the time. We are meeting to death. There just is not enough time, and people are beginning to resent that we need to meet again to discuss something, so time is a really big factor. Time will always be a factor, not only in time to meet and get together and set our goals and establish them, but also when are we going to implement it?

administrator: Certainly there are time constraints and financial constraints. Is the system committed to going SBPD in toto or is it going to be a mixed bag with some central planning and some focus at school? At the moment I like this mixed bag where you are totally in control of where the March PD is going to be in school. There is some direction, but to what extent is it going to be there in the future? I do not know. The other concern is financial. To what extent would PD at the school level be supported financially by central office? Is there any centralized PD budget and under what terms will it be divided so that smaller schools, like this school here, do not suffer? We are not handicapped in any way. It is a concern about equity. Another concern, perhaps depending on the topic we choose, is to what extent can we have speakers and could we afford the honoraria?

teacher: Certainly money is always a factor, and time. There is the planning time as well as the actual time to hold whatever PD activities that you wish to participate in.

administrator: In having some peer coaching (PC) and being SB, the problem is how do we cover the staff, when we do not have any dollars really?

Lack of support from administration

administrator: Their (teachers') perception is sort of you (administrator) are an evaluator and they see you as doing your nitty gritty paperwork and so on, and they do their teaching, rather than looking at you as a resource person. We are all in here to make this the best education process for the school and the kids, and unless they (the system) do something different with teacher evaluation, I do not know how they are going to get rid of that.

teacher: I could see lack of support of the staff, or indifference from the administration. This indifference could lead to the money and resources not being accessed.

administrator: Administrative support and a resistant staff are two concerns and this course is enabling the participants to go out and convince their staffs of the benefits of SBSD.

External restrictions: curriculum

teacher: I think so many changes are coming so fast it is hard to meet all the needs. It will take so much time to in-service on everything. A majority of staff would feel that programs and changes are brought in without enough planning and without preparing the teachers first. Yet because of time and money constraints, I suppose it is not always possible.

teacher: The other inhibiting factor is all the new programs. We have the new math coming out. We have the program continuity. We have the language learning. We have the new French program coming in, and you just look at all the new programs that are hitting elementary, and just to in-service teachers enough to be able to cope with those new programs is going to take way more PD time than we have. So where do we find time for things like program continuity, or the new spelling. As an example, if I need help on spelling, or I need my personal needs of my students and myself. There just is not enough time because there are too many things coming at us from Alberta Education that are mandated, that the other things that we need to do such as social skills, or Lion's Quest, or pro-social skills, may not get done. Where are you going to find the time because all our PD time is being taken up by things that are compulsory, that are mandated, and we are overloaded. It is really bad, particularly at the elementary level, but I think probably throughout the whole system, as there are too many new things coming at us at once. So just to keep our heads above water we are using all our PD time for the mandated stuff. There is not enough time left for us, for perceived needs or personal goals.

administrator: I do not think we are keeping up fast enough. The problem is, in the elementary school right now, things are happening. So many things are happening so fast. One is continuity. Now some people think continuity is dead, and it is not a new issue, just a new term. The minister will not sign and mandate it but I do not personally believe that. I believe it

is a critical issue of education and it was there 20 years ago just under another term before it ever came up as articulation and integration.

administrator: We are not specialists, or there are very few specialists in an elementary school. I think our perceptions towards staff development as elementary teachers are different. I think we value it, more so than possibly high school teachers. With changing curriculum, changing approaches, the new trends that come along that are deemed important by either the board or by the department, it is a struggle to keep up, and things we can do on an ongoing basis in school really do help teachers.

Additional internal restrictions: Staff ownership

administrator: Another restriction is the level of acceptance within the staff. A staff has to be at a particular level where they actually feel empowered to be able to really participate, identify concerns, experiment and attempt to implement changes.

teacher: It actually has to be teachers having real input into it, because without that there develops a lot of resentment. It is something that is put on them that they have to do, and out of that resentment you dissolve all the real benefits of it. So they have to feel that they are empowered.

Staff Stability

administrator: The problem was that I would have a turnover of close to 50 percent in a year sometimes, and you would just about have everybody nicely ready to start that process next year when there went part of your staff. You would have to start again.

administrator: Another factor is staff stability. When you have different players every time, it is hard to have an effective SB program. That is certainly a problem at this school. The staff changes a lot. We have a lot of temporary and probationary contract teachers, so when there are cuts made to staff, the first people to go are the temporary and probationary staff. People find this school is not the most central location in our system.

Time management

supervisor: Sometimes I think they see me as being maybe more interested in it than they are because they have so much on their plate, and its just one of their priorities. It might be lower this month than last month for them, but I think they are very pleased that the system followed the strategic plan and appointed somebody in this capacity.

administrator: It crumbles after a while. You end up with people going off the deep end and using a lot of negative sabotage energy because they cannot handle the pressure of too many things, and you have to know when

to recognize it and back off, and sometimes you do not know until the backs are up against the wall. That is a hard call. We do not round table it enough in education. We do not have the time and the opportunities to interact. I do not think we are keeping up fast enough to the degree that we can manage and the time we have. The problem is, in the elementary school right now many things are happening.

teacher: Time management is a factor.

teacher: The teachers may be involved in too many things, spreading themselves too thin, but definitely I do have to say we are usually too busy, all staff, and I know that applies to everybody.

administrator: This staff has a high level (approximately 30 percent of staff) of stress and personal factors which affect the time these individuals are willing to give for additional PD activities. They do their regular duties as teachers but are not willing to commit the extra time as their personal affairs are by far more important to them in their situations.

Resistance to change, lack of staff support or buy-in, negativity.

teacher: I think there is also still a tendency to let whoever is doing PD look after it and just follow along. I think elementary level teachers have to cover so many bases it is always easier to let somebody look after this, and somebody look after that. I am not sure that there are still enough people involved, taking enough of an interest to commit themselves as far as the work involved in PD.

teacher: I found that very difficult about PD. Why would somebody not buy in? I mean, why would you not do this? It is part of my job to cooperative-unit plan, and I have gone to teachers and said, "give me the unit plan that you have, whatever you have on this topic. I will go through it, come up with some other resources, some field trip ideas, or a whole bunch of ideas and I will give you a half day sub to meet with me and together we will see what we can do to expand on your unit." They respond with, "That is fine. I do not need that right now but if I do I will let you know." Many times I get that.

teacher: It is hard to make people do something they do not want to do, so it makes the job harder. These people are very demanding on your time and your energy, but if you have some successes, one or two, it helps make your job worthwhile.

administrator: Part of it may also reflect the psycho-social acceptance of change. It would be threatening to the attitude "that this too shall pass." Teachers are viewed as change agents, involved in daunting tasks, but I think that historically also, innovations were either/or.

administrator: It is also a threat to some individuals in that they are not comfortable to give it a try.

teacher: One reason might be because of lack of support of their staffs.

administrator: The staff are saying, we are interested in this, this, and this. It may be three or four different topics and at some point I personally have to make some hard decisions because building consensus on a large staff is difficult. Yes it is difficult.

administrator: Another constraint is negativity among certain staff members, especially the articulate ones.

Reasons to Terminate the Program

Participants' Involvement as Viewed by Staff Members

Administrators

administrator: I am involved because the program required an administrative representative and I am one of the administrators on staff. One of my job descriptions is to look after SD and PD, so that is how I became involved. I think teachers as a whole realize that I have been involved in PD before, and I am enthusiastic about it.

administrator: The staff really like that whatever they are doing, I am in there like a dirty shirt doing it too. They like that I am not on a pedestal, removed from practical things. For example, eleven teachers from our staff went and took math "their way" on Saturday mornings. I was not teaching math at the time. I certainly was not teaching primary math at the time, but I was there every Saturday morning learning what my teachers were learning so that when I was in their classrooms I would be able to encourage them. I was able to find out what kind of resources they needed and support those and put money aside for them. They knew that what they were doing was important enough for me to participate. They really liked my involvement in the activities. In terms of the planning of the activities, I do not really think they care whether I am on the committee or not. I think they trust me enough to know that I support whatever they decide that they need.

administrator: I think people feel good about my role. They do not feel threatened by me. They do not see me as an authoritarian, making decisions for them, and in fact I am extremely careful never to say, okay, this is what we will do. It is always going to be based on what you have told me, we will go with this, and I think that is important. It probably happens with some staffs, that there is a need, and boom, the principal dictates what is going to be done about it. It is a fact of life that some administrators have to do that. I mean that is their responsibility. They are in charge of that staff, and if it is important, it has to happen some way. I think there are ways around it in terms of approaches. So my personal style is not to be a leader per se, I like to be thought of more as a facilitator, a coordinator, or a supporter.

supervisor: I think they view me as a support person, a catalyst support person. I think they view me that way.

Teachers

teacher: They expect me to do it with every bandwagon going around. Oh yeah, that is one other thing you are doing. I do not think that staff is very aware of the fact that I am taking the course. They certainly are not really aware of what has happened in the course. They are oblivious to what actually happened, except the actual members of the PD committee, and we pass some articles to them and discuss what we talked about. I would say the rest of the staff would be totally oblivious to the course and our participation in it.

teacher: If you ask most of the teachers they will tell you that I am very active in a lot of things in the school. I definitely take a leadership role in this school in certain things. I also speak up, whether it is what people want to hear or not.

teacher: There is probably some thankfulness, or, "I do not have to organize it. Somebody else is doing it for me." But the selection I think was a concern to some. There certainly has been a concern by a few people as to how the selection was made. Two of us were asked if we would be willing to be PD representatives and at the first staff meeting of the year, we were appointed as such. The staff was told at the staff meeting that we would be the representatives and no one else had the opportunity to volunteer. I think this conflict may have been a big concern to some.

Attitudes and Beliefs Towards the LPD Course

teacher: I have really been enjoying the course. I think it is extremely worthwhile. The instructor uses so many small group activities, not only things you can do on staff, but also ideas that can be used in the classroom with students. I found it extremely interesting to attend these, and I never found myself checking my watch. Part of it might be because of the instructor, and part of it, I think, was because of the content, it does interest me. Another factor is that I enjoy the people that are taking part in this program. It is nice to do something with people who are not just high school social studies teachers. I have enjoyed it very much. I think it has been very worthwhile compared to some workshops that I have attended. Another factor might be as the instructor suggests, "the things that are most worthwhile are not your short one term, one-shot sessions, but being ongoing you get to build on what you have learned." I find that this has helped me retain a lot more of what has gone on in the program, than if I was exposed to it just once, and was forced to go back to my notes. Maybe I would be more inclined to say I do not have time to go back and check it over, and I would find something else to do, or let someone else do it.

teacher: I liked the course in that it really addressed some key issues in working with staff, and how to work with adults. Particularly because I work with elementary students. It was really good to have information on how adults learn and how to approach adults because I concentrate on elementary students, so for me that was very beneficial. I appreciated the different ideas of how to motivate people and get things underway. The

idea of discussing problems and plans with other schools was very beneficial. It was also helpful to discover through discussions that our topics were not that different from everybody else's, so we were not doing anything strange at our school that other people were not. There were common needs and common problems within the system.

teacher: I have learned a lot from it. When I go to the sessions now, my intent is to get finished with it now. We have gone so far and it is time to be doing something else. I think it has been helpful in providing a focus and an opportunity to really think about goals and objectives on our staff.

teacher: I think the instructor is animated and makes the afternoon enjoyable. I think she has shown us some good techniques on how to work with people, and how to plan in a more friendly way. To also get involvement without creating animosity and making people feel that it is coming from them. It is coming from the teachers rather than being imposed upon them. I feel it has been a good experience for me and I think it also has been very good. I think that principals should listen to a lot of things she says on how to put the power back to the people. It is certainly beneficial to learn what other schools are doing. It gives you the feeling that either I am doing okay or I have got to improve, because this school has done such and such, or gaining ideas from others so you know where you can proceed.

administrator: My attitude is certainly positive. I have learned some strategies that can help to improve SD, to get teachers to look at their needs and to be critical of what is being offered. Then to offer practical suggestions for improvement. It has also enabled me to look at what other schools are doing and to discover what is working and what is not. To also help our school work on the strengths of what has been realized in other places. I believe this has been long overdue. From the high school point of view, I know that this is long overdue. I know for a fact that elementary teachers have long been involved in SBSD as could be seen in this program.

Participants' Reasons for Getting Involved

teacher: First of all, it is a selfish reason. I have taught so many years that I like to try new things to keep my interest up so that I do not get in a rut. Second, I like the idea of finding out what others are doing in other schools. You learn a great deal from that. It increases the opportunity to work with, and know the staff better

teacher: I looked upon it as an opportunity to develop professionally. Perhaps something that would look good on my resume.

teacher: I was asked to do it, and I can not help thinking that the reason that I was asked. If you want somebody to do something, ask somebody who is already busy. I have a reputation for following through on things on a commitment. I think the administrator that asked me likes working with me. We are compatible.

administrator: At my previous school it no one ever questioned who would do the PD. It was my responsibility. We worked through peer coaching. One of the interesting things there was training people about what is was and how to be confident and supportive for one another, because I believed in SBSD back then.

Are Needs Being Met?

teacher: I think so many changes are coming so fast it is hard to meet all the needs. It will take so much time to in-service on everything. On our staff a majority would feel that programs and changes are brought in without enough planning and without preparing the teachers first. Yet because of time and money constraints, I suppose it is not always possible. Some of our needs are being met, but not all of them.

administrator: Yes, my personal needs have been met. I am always interested in programs that focus on curriculum needs and that focus on leadership in education. This program has made me aware of what is current.

teacher: Perhaps to a greater degree than some staff members because I have a little more say about what it is that we are looking at. In reality, we do surveys of staff and see what it is that they want to develop, but the arrangements and the final decisions fall on the shoulders of the PD committee.

administrator: We are developing lead teachers in the areas that are of interest to the staff. We have creative solutions put into effect such as the drip method.

Views on Course Details

administrator: I think the presenter is dynamic and she is an excellent teacher who uses excellent teaching strategies. Her methods of presentation and her sense of humor make it a very positive experience. She sets out objectives and she meets them every time. She has the sensitivity to deal with a group which tends to be on a tangent when there is something very important to them which is not among her objectives. She is flexible and sensitive as a teacher and she will temporarily scratch one of her objectives to address our needs, which I think is excellent teaching. She does meet the objectives.

teacher: I enjoy it. I like it. You have to get out of the classroom. I is a change, a positive aspect. It never hurts teachers to be able to have a change from the classroom. I enjoy the instructor, and the material. It is different for me, not being in administration. A number of others may have known some of the different techniques she is talking about, but I did not, so that was new. Certainly I enjoy meeting and working with a variety of

colleagues because there is more than just my level there. The ideas on how to work with colleagues that she presents are interesting.

administrator: The workshop schedule was well paced. Allowance was made to transfer theory into practice and to apply whatever we learned in our own learning situations to our schools. To come back and set objectives for each stage, then come back and re-examine those objectives and to what extent they have been fulfilled. We were asked to set objectives, then come back and report. This initiated action and provided us with a focus. The time-lines were reasonable. I found the presentation method very useful. She avoided lectures.. She used a number of group strategies to generate information, and allowed time for discussion. She managed her presentations with opportunities for participation. The presenter projected confidence, had a sense of humor and a relaxed style. A great deal of focus was placed on the change process, and to concerns related to teachers. Some time was spent on adult learning concerns and how to capitalize on adult learner needs to improve our own SD projects. So on the whole, I thought the LPD program was effective.

teacher: The time-lines were good. I thought there was enough space between sessions for us to come back, work and reflect on what we did. The half day sessions worked very well, there was enough time. It was not spaced out too much that you forgot everything. It worked well, it allowed you time to come back to the school and apply it. I found the instructor an excellent presenter. She was entertaining, interesting and very knowledgeable. She presented a lot of valuable information. The content was very valuable because it gave me a lot of ideas for working with adults as well as varying PD models. She has a wealth of knowledge which allowed her to rattle off ideas. I found her extremely knowledgeable and generally speaking, it was well done. We are often talking about how change occurs and not expecting change over night. That kind of information was beneficial because I think most of the people who were in that course are the people that are on the PD bandwagon. This gave me some good ideas on where my staff are coming from. How their thought processes are going, and how to approach them and try to promote change within them. I meet that resistance a fair bit in my job, so this kind of thing provided me with more ideas on how to approach those kind of people.

administrator: I believe the course has good content. The opportunities to share with others was extremely important, especially their plans, successes and failures, as well as with those in the same grade levels. There was too much to read, and very few participants probably read even half of what was supplied, but it is a good resource. Groups of schools at the same levels enabled setting up of networks. There appeared to be more buy in as others observed the results being discussed and clarified through discussions. There could be more sharing time, especially in the area of how to implement the ideas and activities that worked at the participating schools. There is definitely a tremendous body of information in this course.

administrator: Allowing that we can be together during an afternoon where you are not worrying about supper, kids, hockey, whatever, really helps. I think the instructor is an excellent workshop leader. She has a style that is easy to follow. She gets the points across quite well. A nice balance of

imparting her expertise and her observations in the field, with participants getting together and talking about their situations. Having people together as a diverse group like that really is helpful for me because in a large group I know the same problems I might be having, are out there at other schools. I am not a novelty here, and teachers are teachers, and staffs are staffs. Being able to sound off with someone who is having the same problems is helpful. That is important.

Drive to be a Lead Teacher

teacher: Part of it is probably my personality or what makes me tick. I think that one of the things that has always motivated me is to be at the top of the heap in terms of performance. I was like that in school too. One of the motivators has always been what people think of me. They will like me better if they know I am a hard worker, or they see that I am trying to do good things. I can not help think that that is what motivates me to some extent, but undoubtedly, as I have been getting older, more of it may be selfish because I am looking for how it is going to make things better for me. I enjoy working in the school with kids and I just like to see things going as well as they possible can. I do not believe I have ever seen things work perfectly in a situation anywhere, so there is the motivation to keep trying.

administrator: From the point of view of PD, I have been involved with the A.T.A. for 10 years. I have served as president of the sub local and local in another school division. I was on several convention committees. I have always been interested in improving my teaching techniques. In spite of my years of experience, I still get a charge going to conventions. I feel very guilty if I miss any sessions. I think in all my history I missed once, I over stayed a lunch time, and I feel very guilty about it.

administrator: The opportunity to share ideas, to lead by example, to facilitate and to work with, rather than above the staff, motivates me. I can see the value of adult learning processes and developing leaders.

Progress to Date

elementary teacher: We made a lot more progress this year than we did last. Last year we did not get off the ground at all, and this year we have involved the committee. Last year the committee was a little upset because they were not set up in time. We now have a plan in place. We have established goals at our school, and a lot of that came through the community school. We have established our priorities for PD. We have staff giving a lot more input into what they really want in terms of needs. We still have work to do in the area where they really feel that they have ownership. We have decided that our next year PD goal will be focused on Lion's Quest (LQ) and we are deciding right now on the time lines. We have come together a lot. We are looking at LQ which will be an ongoing thing, so will program continuity and language learning. We are not dropping all of those, but we are not going to concentrate our PD on those. We will try to provide the help and support for individuals. We have got a direction for the next three years or so, and we have our specific goals for

next year set, and are working on our time lines. We have come a long way because this time last year we were nowhere.

elementary administrator: We have a five year plan which is ongoing, with five major thrusts. Staff recognizes it as a growth plan for each individual, not just the school or system. We have a staff that is willing to take risks with the support of the administration. Concerns are always open for debate, as we use a problem solving approach. It is like two gears that mesh together at our school. One gear of grades one to three, and the other gear from grades four to six. These gears are constantly turning and in constant touch with each other at different points and at different speeds. The administration just happens to be bouncing between the gears of the two levels all the time, as a facilitator, a guide and a resource.

elementary administrator: We have a whole staff plan, and we some areas that were for individual or small groups of staff members. For example in early reading intervention, we had 2 individuals go to the training for that. We have one lead teacher on staff who consults with those two individuals who are learning that program. We have 2 teachers going through the training for French as a Second Language (FSL), and that again is system training. We have some individuals who wanted the diagnostic math program training so they go to sessions as they are available by the system. We have individuals attending sessions in behavior management. There were small groups or teacher aides that we were sending to SD opportunities on first aid, Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), defensive driving, and aiding special needs students.. We are using our SBPD money to address the needs of individuals. We have a school plan and then we have a small group or an individual plan as well.

high school teacher: We have our committee struck, and we are now trying to plan our PD day in March. We have a topic we are working on and it has to do with what kind of school we want. At least we have gotten that far. It has taken us a while, but we were finding we were going nowhere. We would come back after listening to the elementary people talk about their program continuity activities but it was not getting us anywhere fast. We are hoping that our topic will be something that everybody will be a little bit keen about, that they can get involved with. It certainly is a topic that is definitely Staff Development as opposed to PD.

high school administrator: We are not at that point yet, because the program really has not taken off. Our first in-school SD is projected to take place on March 10, and we have a whole day to use. We have not done anything yet, except choose a topic.